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THE CULT OF CRUELTY

by Alan Reynolds Thompson

THREE or four years ago a certain American journalist, who shall be nameless so far as this article is concerned, published a book about the island of Haiti, in which he singled out for careful elaboration the more lurid aspects of savage life there, particularly the voodoo rites and dances. One of the latter, which the author seems to have had the rare privilege of watching, he describes with what fairly can be called gusto; and he writes with something very like warm commendation of how the animal impulses of the men and women were gradually freed from hampering inhibitions to be fully satisfied in the surrounding forest. Thus, we feel him imply, would we so-called civilized whites also act were we not miserably bound to convention.

The author, in one respect at any rate, has not been so bound. His book on Haiti proved a sensation, and presumably encouraged by its large sales he turned to Africa, to study Negroes in their original environment, entirely *au naturel*. The result is another book which, if one may judge from the reviews, possesses a unique quality that should I suppose attract all right-minded readers—in it the author tells how he ate human flesh. Undoubtedly actuated by pure scientific motives, he seems to have gone native—all the way. One presumes that his investigations are an addition to the archives of anthropology. At all events they probably had a large sale.

It is, I think, significant that the reviewers of this book, so far as I read them, though somewhat shocked, saw no reason why they should not give it considerable space and consequently considerable free advertising.

The methods of reviewers with this sort of thing are worth noting further. Consider for example an excerpt from the review of another book, this time a novel, published within the last year. The author again shall be nameless, since the identification of the book is unimportant for our purpose, and since the fact which is important is that such things are not particularly unusual in these days, nor particularly shocking to the reviewer. In part he writes: "For those who like strong stuff this is an exciting piece of

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contemporary naturalism, in which blood, lust, torture, agony and violent death follow one another by turns. In Book One a graphic account of an appendicitis operation without the use of ether follows a series of vividly described vomitings. The invalid then has an affair with his nurse who, possessed of a weak heart, dies from the excitement. In Book Two a helpless man is beaten up in a police inspector's office. There is a seduction scene. And a suicide and a couple of shootings complete the carnage. Few details are spared the reader. In Book Three the description of a childbirth takes up much of the space. At the end, after elaborate physical details, there occurs the horrible death of a small baby. Throughout the book almost all imaginable states are described in language that is as frank as possible". The reviewer concludes with the comment: ". . . if the novel is not important even in its own special field, it remains the most exciting as well as the most brutal of all the many contemporary tales with New York underworld, police, and political backgrounds that I have seen".

Such a review indicates an era that has been hard-boiled so long as to have become tough. But lest I seem to over-emphasize works which the reviewers have at all events not thought important, let me turn to one which possesses greater pretense to literary significance.

This is a romance—of a sort—called *Four Handsome Negresses*, by an author who calls himself R. Hernekin Baptist. It is clever in style and technique, and original in theme. Its story tells of the abduction from the Guinea coast of four innocent children of African nature by a shipload of disgusting civilized Portuguese mariners in the early days of their explorations. The author, following a hoary romantic tradition, describes the life of the savages as a primitive paradise, to which it is true he admits one or two snakes, but which nevertheless he contrasts in glowing, if not lurid, colours with the wickedness of Christian civilization. In sophistication this theme is an advance over the book earlier mentioned, since in this the savages are, so to speak, not the eaters but the eaten. The girls are abducted while bathing in the sea, clean, healthy, innocent, and naked. They are imprisoned in what for them is a floating hell, given over to filth, lust, disease, murder, and suicide. The author tells us all about these things, in great detail, with detached elegance but manifest relish.

But I have enlarged enough on this sort of book to illustrate in our literature a tendency for which the reader can probably supply other and even more sensational examples. I wish to consider now two American writers whose literary importance is not in question.

William Faulkner is a young Southerner who wrote several volumes without exciting any special attention, but whose last-published novel, *Sanctuary*, brought him suddenly into wide notice, and who may be said to have had his reputation canonized by a leading article in *The Saturday Review of Literature* and an essay in THE BOOKMAN. The latter study, by Mr. Granville Hicks, is welcome for its intelligent analysis of Mr. Faulkner's sometimes very obscure and intricate experiments in technique; and it makes what seems a penetrating criticism when it asks "Have we here some new, some sharply individual view of life creating for itself new forms, or a keen but mechanical intelligence posing for itself problems that it loves to solve?", and inclines to the latter view. Again, it raises the question whether such themes as Mr. Faulkner chooses are suitable for literature. To this question we shall recur. At present I wish to use but one quotation from Mr. Hicks: "It is amazing, when one stops to think of it,

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the pathological range that he has traversed. . . . With few exceptions, Faulkner's men and women are twisted shapes in the chaotic wreckage of a mad world".

The editor of *The Saturday Review* is not merely amazed but shocked. Speaking of *Sanctuary* Dr. Canby exclaims: "Here in this sadistic story is decadence in every sense that criticism has ever given the word, except dilettanteism—there is none of that". (If Mr. Hicks's suggestion is sound there is that also.) "The emotions are sharpened to a febrile obsession with cruelty, lust, and pain which exaggerates a potentiality of human nature at the expense of human truth."

Without specifying the details of this novel, which can be read by those curious in such matters, it will be enough to say that the central incident is a rape, which is made particularly hideous by the fact that the criminal who commits the act is an impotent degenerate. Minor episodes are murder, intimate incidents from a house of prostitution, and the lynching of an innocent man. Mr. Faulkner, moreover, is careful not to let us know all the horrors at once, but gradually reveals them bit by bit at moments when the revelations will cause the maximum of shock. When reviewing this novel I was forced to record the fact that the author had in my case, if shocking was his design, succeeded. Other reviewers were not less sensitive. One of them writes almost with a tone of awe. "There is no adjective that by itself could describe what Mr. Faulkner has here created, nor any that could compass the evil that he has drawn out of the world's black and secret pockets. For what he has done is to write not only of horrible things, but to write of them in words that sweat some final distillation, some ultimate essential of horror inseparable from his own sentiments." Truly the title is the only amiable thing about *Sanctuary*.

At the same time we cannot dismiss this novel as unimportant, for Mr. Faulkner can write. In earlier works he tried too experimental and obscure a technique, but in this his language is on the whole only too clear. His plot is beautifully constructed, for though it is intricate it moves with a constantly heightened tension toward a seemingly inevitable catastrophe and a bitterly ironical end. His characters come alive and his analysis of their motives is subtle and convincing.

But though notable and significant, he is not in the same rank with Robinson Jeffers. The latter is final exhibit in our native chamber of horrors, last because most extreme and most powerful. He lives in California, a State whose boosters have never been noted for reluctance to notify the world of local celebrities but have so far shown no marked activity in celebrating him. Yet he is unquestionably the most remarkable writer whose gifts have been fostered by that commonwealth. His descriptions of natural scenery, especially that rugged, beautiful coastal region near Carmel where he lives, are magnificent. He has unusual power to portray character and analyze motive, so that actual people seem to move in his narratives. He tells a story in verse in such a way that the reader is held as fascinated and reluctant as the Wedding Guest. We should in fact be glad if we could laugh at these poems because laughter would afford relief from their monstrous imaginings. Finally his language, expressed through long, irregularly rhythmic lines, approaches that impressive elevation and gravity which the neoclassic critic would have called the grand style. He is a preacher's son, ironically enough, and may well have profited by the study of the Bible in the heightening of his style if he did not profit by it in other ways. Similarly he seems to have profited by a study of Greek literature. He brings from

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science and modern philosophy reflections that lend significance to his outrageous narratives. And if he does not manifest "high seriousness", he is in all conscience serious enough—serious with a sincerity which is almost insanely intense. Consequently he is very impressive.

But his themes are horrible. Mr. Jeffers is obsessed by the thought of death. He imagines the details of physical dissolution with searing vividness, and enlarges upon the details of that other death, the death of the human mind, in all its varied manifestations of madness, lust, and perversion. A constantly recurring theme is incest. To give but one example: *The Women at Point Sur* tells of a father, a former preacher, who may be regarded according to the author's account either as a Nietzschean superman with a vision of a religion higher than Christianity, or as having, simply, gone crazy, but who at all events rapes his own daughter. There are other incidents; but, in the words of Hugo's Ruy Gomez, "j'en passe, et des meilleurs".

These instances I think indicate the existence in our country today of a tendency which we may call the cult of cruelty.

II

The rise of such a cult doubtless strikes the old-fashioned American with some alarm. At the beginning of our century Professor Bliss Perry in a survey of our fiction commended it for "its fundamental morality". "It is optimistic," he wrote. "Its outlook on life is wholesome. The stain of doubtful morality or flaring immorality which has often tinged English and Continental fiction, and made both the English and American stage at times unspeakably foul, has left scarcely any imprint as yet upon the better-known American story-writers." From that state of innocence what a fall is this, my countrymen!

Perhaps the quotation is not wholly apt since the issue here is not one of morality but of cruelty. The defenders of the cult may rise in wrath to declare that of the authors I have cited the most notable, at least, cannot be justly charged with immorality at all. If the meaning of immorality be limited to the incitement to sexual conduct contrary to law or religion, I should agree, since neither Mr. Faulkner nor Mr. Jeffers makes such conduct in any way attractive. At the same time, I might add, the word should not be so limited, and in my opinion nothing is more immoral, because more destructive of civilization, than cruelty. But to argue on the subject may befog the issue of this essay, which is concerned with cruelty in literature, not ethics. And the quotation is useful at least in marking the very great change that has taken place in a quarter century of our literature. It may be worth while to consider briefly some possible causes for this change.

Cruelty, of course, is inherent in human nature. Emile Faguet, going to the logical extremes characteristic of French critics, makes this fact the basis for a theory of tragedy. According to him we enjoy the sufferings of others in tragedy because of a barbaric enjoyment, we being safe and sound. He is careful to add that we are not actually savages; rather, we have traces of savagery in us. This theory surely omits the more significant emotions of pity and compassion, but no doubt there is some truth in it. Certainly the lust for cruelty has been an occasional element in European art since the Romans. There is much of it in Elizabethan drama, even Shakespeare, as with the blinding of Gloucester. The romantic movement ushered in a throng of eager penmen, ardent to exploit all the possible thrills that could be aroused by literary artifice. Victor Hugo, who exploited them himself, praised Baudelaire, that pathologi-

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cal genius and translator of Poe, for having discovered a *frisson nouveau*, and romantics ever since have been hounding out *frissons nouveaux* from the borderlands of insanity, lust, perversion, and cruelty. The French were half a century in advance of us in that hunt, but we, though fifty years behindhand, are now yelping along the same reeking trail.

There was one American well ahead in the race, to be sure; and if any defender of American originality in the arts should wish to cite Poe, he is welcome to that isolated exception. But between the early romantics, including Poe, and our modern cruelty-mongers there is a noticeable difference in one respect, which is not without importance. The romantics generally experimented after merely melodramatic effects for their own sake, seeking gooseflesh for the sake of gooseflesh, and shivers from the simple naïve delight of shivering. But our moderns are building their horrors much more seriously and maturely on a philosophy of life. Mr. Hicks, it is true, suspects Mr. Faulkner of having not a philosophy but an experimental interest in horror like that of Poe and Bierce, whose minds he describes as not unlike "the minds of shrewdly plotting madmen". At the same time one feels that Mr. Faulkner's view of life, as the critic in another connection admits, is consonant with that of many other moderns and represents broadly speaking a pessimistic scepticism, to which morals and aspirations are merely customs and dreams, and the world is an inhuman mechanism. Certainly this is a common view today, and a change from the optimistic idealism of the romantics, and from the Christian tradition of western Europe.

This change, as I have noted elsewhere, may be explained in part by the levelling processes of democracy and the dreary results of industrialism, but chiefly by the influence of nineteenth-century science. Recently some of the scientists themselves have turned mystical; but it is not of the scientists themselves, or of science proper, that I speak, so much as of the inferences which intelligent laymen have drawn from these sources. One of these inferences is that the Christian view of man's position in the universe is false not only literally but figuratively, and that he is not made in the image of God but is a higher evolved ape, not immortal and central, but the insignificant and mortal prey to mechanical accident, his free will illusion and his career as blind as that of a car without a driver.

Such views have long been taken seriously in Europe, as the popularity of Schopenhauerian pessimism or Nietzschean ruthlessness indicates; but Americans were too preoccupied with pioneering and industrial expansion, and as a consequence too naïvely optimistic to worry over them. But of late years, particularly since the war, we have had time and occasion also to consider and adopt this scientific naturalism widely.

Now there are two normal ways of reacting seriously to such a view. One is to feel pity for man in such a predicament. And pity is what we chiefly feel in the novels of Hardy, for example. But another reaction is to scorn pity as sentimental, and attempt the rôle of strong man defying the cruelty of creation, like the "freeman" that Bertrand Russell so eloquently described. Such a rôle will give some dignity to cruel impulses latent in ourselves. If, as modern investigation seems to indicate, they are often allied to sexual impulses, it is easy to understand how under apparent philosophic sanction they are likely to be widely liberated. Some forty years ago Lemaître wrote of the French novelist, "Bestiality and imbecility are in M. Zola's eyes man's very essence". America has since

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had in Theodore Dreiser its own little Zola —a rather sentimental and loquacious one, it is true, a Zola with a stutter. And Dreiser, along with the so-called critical realists—Mencken, Lewis, and the rest—during the twenties prepared the soil for our present crop of cruelty. We have caught up with Europe, and if we consider our usual tendency to override any fad we will probably go beyond her.

III

But to note the existence and some causes of the cult is not our primary aim. These are preliminaries to an attempt at judgment. What should the critic think of such things?

First of all he will not evaluate the cult on moral grounds. Whether morals are written in the heavens or merely recorded in tribal customs is a vital question for our age, but so far as the purpose of this discussion is concerned the answer is immaterial. We are dealing with the problem from the point of view of aesthetics, not of ethics.

For the same reason we shall not attempt to meet naturalism with philosophical arguments. To do so is entirely possible and extremely important, as evidently a number of critics have felt recently, since they have tried to philosophize on both sides of the debate. If in time the recognized philosophers and scientists should generally abandon naturalism, undoubtedly literary folk would do likewise, even as now a great many of them take Croce or Eddington or John Dewey as spiritual guides. But desirable as such an event might be, to aid it is not within the scope of this essay. Our attempt is less ambitious, but perhaps for the student of literature not less important, since, though literature is concerned with life in all its fulness, it is primarily an art. We shall attempt to judge cruelty in literature purely on aesthetic grounds.

In this attempt we immediately encounter the difficulty that for a century critics have generally agreed that they have no business judging an author's subject matter. In 1829 Hugo made the declaration with characteristic emphasis. *"Is the work good or is it bad?* That is the whole extent of the critical province. . . . There are in poetry no good and no bad subjects, there are only good and bad poets . . . Everything is a subject." Even earlier Hazlitt had expressed himself with similar fervour. "There is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man which he would be eager to communicate to others, or which they would listen to with delight, that is not a fit subject for poetry. . . . Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness, all are poetry." Writing on Zola, Lemaître urged us to "enlarge our sympathies". "Let us allow everything to the artist, except to be mediocre and tiresome." Mr. Spingarn, theorist-in-chief to our literary radicals, in a noted address which has just been republished, swept the boards with a grand gesture of all the traditional counters of criticism, crying "we have done with" them all, and among the rest, "We have done with all moral judgment of art as art. . . . Romantic criticism first enunciated the principle that art has no aim except expression; that its aim is complete when expression is complete. . . . The poet's only moral duty as a poet is to be true to his art, and to express his vision of reality as well as he can". It is natural then for Mr. Hicks to ask regarding Faulkner, "Can we not, at the very outset, disregard the contention that his subjects count against him? Can we not take it for granted that there is no subject that is inherently and inevitably unsuited for fiction?"

It is clear that this exclusion of subject

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matter, no matter what, is not merely a doctrine but a dogma, and we needs must consider its validity. Must we indeed disregard Mr. Faulkner's subjects?

It seems to me that the dogma rests on an ambiguity; that in one sense it is true, in another false; and that its tenacity is due to its true sense, its mischievousness for criticism to its false. The ambiguity lies in identifying under the one term "subject matter" the raw material of life, and that which results when an artist has utilized that raw material in poetry. Thus the dogma is manifestly true when restated: a work of art is not to be judged by the raw material of actuality from which its theme is drawn but by the effects of the work of art itself. An act in life produces one effect upon an observer; in poetry the narration of it produces another. This latter is an aesthetic effect, and though psychologically speaking it may be of the same emotional nature as the former, that means nothing more than that all the emotions arise out of a common source; but as a matter of obvious experience the emotions of the study or the playhouse ordinarily differ vastly from those engendered by the experiences of life that literature imitates. At a melodrama, to be sure, a child or childlike adult may become in imagination so entirely identified with the action as to lose awareness of its unreality. But before the work of art we preserve what some aestheticians call "aesthetic distance" or a degree of conscious detachment, knowing the fictions are imaginary but also partially experiencing them. A weary critic may occasionally be too detached to feel any of the emotional effect intended. He is at the opposite extreme from the child. The proper aesthetic attitude, then, is a balance between the extremes of utter identification and detachment. And obviously the emotions which we feel when we preserve this balance differ from those we feel when identification is complete.

It would seem that this distinction is too obvious ever to be confused; and indeed it is when actually stated. But it is a different matter when it is implicit, and when a form of language, seeking the emphasis of brevity, verbally identifies the two things. Thus Hazlitt tells us that contempt, jealousy, remorse, and the rest, "all *are* poetry". We may grant that this is simply the author's emphatic way of urging that the range of poetry should be enlarged. The pseudo-classical dogmas of the eighteenth century had unduly restricted it; and the romanticists whom Hazlitt represents were right in demanding greater freedom. But the statement, taken literally, is false, for contempt, jealousy, remorse, and the rest are *not* poetry, but only the raw material from which poetry *may* be created. Yet romantic theorists since Hazlitt have too often accepted such a statement as almost literally true, and it is a rather common notion today that "poetic people" are those who *feel* most keenly, entirely disregarding the question whether such people have the power to express their feelings adequately through an artistic medium. Hence have arisen bohemianism and the silly excesses of unrestrained emotionality which are dignified by being called artistic temperament.

A work of art must be judged by its effects as such, which are, generally speaking, emotional; but these are aesthetic, not "actual" emotions. Hence, if we return to Mr. Hicks's question, we see that he is too ready to disregard objections to Mr. Faulkner's subjects. What Mr. Hicks is concerned with vindicating is the writer's freedom to attempt any subject. But those who object to Mr. Faulkner's subjects are on the other hand not at all concerned with denying this freedom. Perhaps they do not always state their real

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objections adequately. But, it seems to me, they have a genuine critical ground for making objections, which is that Mr. Faulkner has failed to transmute the raw material of life in such a way as to give them, as readers, a purely aesthetic effect. This is indeed what Mr. Hicks himself seems to feel, but confused by the ambiguity of his dogma he does not state the issue fairly. Such a confusion seems to me to justify my view that the dogma has had mischievous effects for criticism.

Let us apply these considerations to the cult of cruelty, and following Hugo's example, make our positive declaration in italics. *Emotional effects which approximate the "actual" experience of lust or cruelty are inartistic.* They destroy all detachment and make the proper aesthetic attitude impossible.

This is the general feeling of men of taste, including the critics so far as they are recording their actual reactions and not trying to live up to an ambiguous dogma. Consider for example Sainte-Beuve. "Art, all theory notwithstanding, art in actual practice, is not a purely abstract affair, independent of all human sympathy. . . . Art in itself, to be sure, does not indeed aim at sensibility, any more than it aims at morality, but neither does it necessarily affect the contrary. Goethe, whom no one will accuse of narrowness, and who comprehended everything, that universal critic whose taste was the most catholic and hospitable, always recoiled from scenes where the odious and the hideous were too prolonged."

This is also the universal practice of the great artists of the past. It is pre-eminently exemplified by the Greeks. Of their tact in such matters Lessing affords us a famous example. His great critical work, *Laokoön,* is of course so entitled because it starts with a consideration of the Greek statue of that name. Everyone is familiar with the group, which represents the Trojan priest and his two sons being crushed to death by serpents. If treated naturalistically every muscle of the suffering men would be contracted like a knot; the lips would be drawn back, the teeth bared, the mouth distended as by shrieks of agony, the eyes starting from their sockets, the limbs contorted and writhing. Such a sight in reality might make an unhardened observer actually sick.

But the Greek sculptor was not a naturalist. He exercised the utmost care not to represent literally but to suggest only the horror and suffering of the victims. "The master aimed at the highest beauty compatible with the adopted circumstances of bodily pain. The latter, in all its disfiguring violence, could not be combined with the former; therefore he must reduce it; he must soften shrieks into sighs, not because a shriek would have betrayed an ignoble soul, but because it would have produced a hideous contortion of the countenance."

And he went further, carefully concentrating the attention on the central figure of Laokoön himself, whom he made a man of magnificent and heroic physique, and in whom he suggested an heroic fortitude in death. The effect on the observer is consequently not disgust nor horror but pity mingled with admiration, an emotion which is powerful without destroying the objective enjoyment of the work of art.

A considerable part of Lessing's book is concerned with showing how narrative art permits a franker account of horrors than does pictorial art. At the same time his citations from ancient poetry show how notably reserved the poets were, as well as the sculptors. The tragedies have often been cited, by those who would defend such moderns as Faulkner and Jeffers as being great poetry based on horrible themes. But the horror is

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not in the tragedies; it has been carefully left in the barbaric legends, carefully excluded from actual representation, toned down and idealized, or left to the common knowledge of the spectators. It may indeed be a horrible thing to marry one's mother in actuality. The figure of Œdipus in the tragedy is not horrible at all; on the contrary he is thoroughly heroic and kingly, regal in his imperious will, intelligent if suspicious throughout his ignorance, and magnanimous in his final desolation. We are wrung by pity because we admire him; by fear because we know that the noblest men may fall victim to chance, and that our best intentions may betray us. Thus Œdipus in the tragedy exemplifies the great tragic tradition because he excites not horror, not disgust, not despair, nor any base passion, but admiration.

This distinction of Greek art becomes vivid if we contrast the Greek treatment of such a theme with that of other cultures. The Roman Seneca composed tragedies carefully after the Greek model, and dealt with themes used by several extant Greek tragedies. But in each case he stressed the horrors and mere sensations which the Greeks subdued or hid from representation. If he was actually the tutor to Nero, there is a poetic justice in the fact. At all events the race which cultivated the arena might be expected to debase tragedy to bloody melodrama and rant.

The Elizabethans also were a barbaric lot, and took from Seneca, whom they supposed a true model of classicism, all that was bloody and bombastic and horrible. Even Shakespeare was not free from such effects. Yet to understand the greatness of Shakespeare, and to see the significance of our distinction between what is merely horrible and what is aesthetically beautiful, one could hardly do better than contrast the crudely Senecan *Spanish Tragedy* of Kyd, in which the actor who plays the hero is asked to add the finishing touch to a shambles of blood by biting his own tongue out, with the *Hamlet* that is based on closely similar material yet is in spite of its bloodshed a work of supreme beauty. Shakespeare often exploited melodramatic effects that served to hold the interest of his restless and rather brutal audiences, but it is not the sensations and horrors that make him great, but the profound analysis of character, the soaring lyric expression, the heroic passion, the universal comprehension. The emotions that he excites are profound in the best sense of the word because they excite not gooseflesh but reflection on the chief issues of life.

A direct contrast between modern and Greek practice upon the same theme is in the treatment of the legend of Orestes by Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides on the one hand, and by Jeffers on the other, in his poem *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*. Our modern poet utilizes the legend to illustrate his central idea that we should "break through" a humanity depraved by introversion and find freedom in unnatural deeds. This idea is sufficiently different from the Greek ideal of humane moderation to be text for considerable discussion; but I am not now concerned with the philosophy of the poem so much as the direct emotional effect on the reader. The average reader today, untrained to any conscious artistic attitude, will I think react much more strongly to Mr. Jeffers's poem than to the Greek dramas. This response will of course be partly due to his unfamiliarity with the civilization out of which the dramas developed, and to the inadequacy of translations. It will be partly due to the inherent strength of Mr. Jeffers's writing, of which I have spoken. But it will be chiefly due, I think, to the unconscious preference, which the average reader today acquires from liv-

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ing in a naturalistic tradition, for vivid sensationalism.

Agamemnon:

> . . . the ships
> Ooze pitch and the August road smokes dirt, I smell like an old shepherd's goatskin, you'll have bath-water?
> . . . tall dark Cassandra, the prophetess,
> The beautiful girl with whom a God bargained for love, high-nurtured, captive, shamefully stained
> With the ship's filth and the sea's, rolled her dark head upon her shoulders like a drunken woman . . .

Of Ægisthus, Orestes:

> That dog
> Fell under his chariot, we made sure of him between the wheels and the hooves, squealing.

Orestes again, after killing Clytemnestra:

> . . . Drink, drink, dog.
> Drink dog.
> He reaches up a tongue between the stones lapping it. So thirsty old dog, uh?
> Rich and sticky.*

Sensationalism this is, in the literal sense of the word, and to tastes trained to relish it Greek moderation may seem insipid. Yet we must remember that the Greek critic on the contrary would probably have felt that the practice of his race was the perfection of power because controlled by intelligence toward a goal of harmonious beauty, and that such treatment as Jeffers's is barbaric because centered on the monstrous and crudely sensational. Such unmitigated classicism is no doubt unsuited to our advanced age and refined manners! Let us not then attempt to defend it; let us simply use it to remind ourselves that our so-called natural tastes are really the result of long training in a tradition so utterly alien to the Greek that we are hardly in a position to judge the latter by them alone.

* From *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and other Poems.* Liveright, 1925.

IV

"All this may be true," we may imagine the young modernist responding; "it sounds reasonable enough, and I shan't try to dispute it. But the fact remains that I like Jeffers. He gives me a 'kick' I don't get out of the Greeks. Besides, I'm tired of hearing everlastingly about the Greeks, the Greeks, the Greeks. And why shouldn't I like Jeffers anyhow?"

Why indeed? There is really no argument about that, since we are all free to like what we find it in us to like, and I for one can in a way sympathize with my friend's exasperation, and share his feelings. I too weary of many stodgy references to Sophocles and Aristotle, just as I weary of getting my tax statements, or of hearing the Ten Commandments. But my weariness does not stop the assessment of property, nor make wrongdoing right; and it will not alter the fact that the Greeks have still much to tell us about art. I too relish Jeffers's concrete vividness, thrill to his dramatic power, and get a "kick" out of him generally. But I find it impossible to read him continuously and preserve an aesthetic attitude toward him.

His crude horror destroys the delicate balance of aesthetic distance. It attacks my nerves, as it were, physically. Behaviourists have made much of the physiological changes that accompany, or, as they would put it, create emotional states. I am grateful to them for aiding me in this connection. Whether the change creates the state, or the state the change, or both occur together, is a matter of indifference to me. It seems at all events evident that for all emotions there are physiological changes, and that we can order emotions in a scale according as these changes

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range from the minute and outwardly imperceptible to gross visceral upheavals. In this scale obviously ordinary aesthetic emotion is of the former sort, since it involves the higher centers of the brain (wherever they are) and exists only with detachment. But crude horrors, naked lusts, destroy detachment and cause manifest visceral changes. They upset the anatomy of the sensitive when encountered in books less severely but in the same way as when encountered in experience. Everyone for example knows for what purposes the class of books euphemistically advertised as "curiosa" is bought and read. A slap on the face is a physical assault, and its emotional effect is obviously enough a visceral reaction. Our modern cruelty-mongers are continually slapping us on the face, or assaulting our bodies in some other and more intimate fashion. We say we like a book with "guts"; we mean we like our own viscera stirred up.

And of course there is no law against it. But let us, like Doctor Johnson, free our minds of cant. Let us not, because we happen to be barbarian enough to like the crude visceral sensation, pretend that it is something aesthetic. If a person likes getting drunk, or attending a lynching, or dancing a Caucasian imitation of a voodoo dance, he does not call it an aesthetic pleasure. If he seeks such sensations vicariously out of books, he might at least be equally honest. The response to beauty involves the higher powers of the mind. These cannot endure when the gross animal instincts are aroused.

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JOHN GALSWORTHY—AN APPRAISAL

by Joseph J. Reilly

When the distinguished English novelist John Galsworthy delivered a few lectures in Greater New York last spring, his appropriately heralded presence attracted large audiences in the metropolitan area. It did something even more important. It moved a large section of the American reading public to talk about him with some show of interest, and the discriminating minority to turn afresh to his books and, with their excellences and shortcomings in mind, attempt to decide upon his place among the masters of English fiction.

Everybody knows that Galsworthy was born in 1867, that he was educated at Harrow and at Oxford, that he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1890, that he made a journey around the world, that he gave up law for literature, and that he has to his credit many distinguished essays, short stories, sketches, plays and novels, and even a volume of verse.

For the first years of his career as novelist (1898-1901) Galsworthy wrote under a pseudonym. In 1904 he published *The Island Pharisees* with his own name and followed it two years later with what is probably his masterpiece, his first Forsyte novel, *The Man of Property*. During the next fourteen years he wrote seven novels and in 1920, after a lapse of fourteen years, he returned to the Forsytes and produced a sequel, *In Chancery*. This move opened the way for further chronicles of the family, and the very next year Galsworthy produced *To Let*, a third volume in the Forsyte series. In 1922 these three novels, with two connecting Interludes, appeared in one volume under the title *The Forsyte Saga*.

Having gone so far and made a new generation of Forsytes his concern—with generous applause from critics and public—Galsworthy was tempted to continue, and for the next six years (1922-1928) his interest in fiction was centered on the further doings of that long-lived family. *The White Monkey*, *The Silver Spoon*, and *Swan Song* appeared biennially in succession, and, with two connecting Interludes, were published in 1929 as *A Modern Comedy*. It is with these two trilogies that Mr. Galsworthy's name is most intimately associated and on them that his reputation as a novelist chiefly rests.

With the evidence before us of such industry and skill as they unquestionably present, precisely what are we to think of Galsworthy?

Of his success there is no question. His books have sold widely, they have won him recognition at home and abroad, they have so impressed us in America that we consider him the foremost living English novelist and probably the superior of any living American. The ablest and best-balanced of American critics goes so far as to declare that only *The Forsyte Saga* among present-day novels in our tongue will last a century.

This celebrity as a novelist does not rest upon long fiction alone. It is paralleled by short stories, essays, sketches, often published

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in popular magazines, and by plays which have won Galsworthy a place with Barrie and Shaw. All these productions bear the impress of a single shaping hand and of a unique personality. They appear at frequent intervals, keep Galsworthy's name constantly in the public eye, and are, to a striking and (for Galsworthy) fortunate degree, mutually reinforcing.

Above all things else Galsworthy is a conscientious workman. He could no more indulge in the Arnold Bennett type of pot-boiler than he could make a balloon ascension in order to advertise his books. His work is never hastily done; in fact it is planned with the same forethought and executed with the same care as would have characterized the briefs of John Galsworthy, solicitor, charged with important litigation. Perhaps it is not merely an accident that his most important and most completely drawn character, Soames Forsyte, "the man of property", is a lawyer, and that he is painstakingly attentive to every detail of his life; that he has, in a word, the Galsworthian conscience. Soames's daughter Fleur has a similar sense of orderliness and efficiency despite the post-war environment in which she moves and it serves her equally in selecting the right sort of people to give atmosphere to her drawing-room and in operating a soup kitchen during the great strike. So too Michael, Soames's son-in-law, who must give business details his honest consideration and, on entering Parliament, must, in lieu of convictions, at least find and espouse definite principles.

Galsworthy's orderliness, his sense of conscience in all his work, is evident in his style no less than in the fashioning of his novels. It is an unusual style, smooth, graceful, supple, and in the competent hands of its master it is a skilful instrument. It lacks the point and precision of Shaw's and the virility of Bennett's. It is the reflex of a different type of mind, a more impressionable, a more sensitive, a less masculine type than theirs.

A mind like Galsworthy's, with its feminine side, is not necessarily lacking in vital interests or in the tenacity to cleave to them. His particular concern is with social conditions as affected by the injustice, selfishness, and lack of vision of the wealthy and aristocratic classes, and even his love episodes are coloured by that concern and projected against that background. With a quicker sensitiveness than his contemporaries and a deeper pity he sees poverty and its attendant evils not primarily as superscientific questions like Wells, not as merely personal conditions like Bennett, not things to be triumphed over by an imagination, a fairy godmother, or a happy turn of fortune like Barrie, but first of all as objects of human sympathy and after that as intolerable effects of a social and economic situation for which well-to-do Britons must be answerable.

In *The Forsyte Saga*, Galsworthy turns his attention to the well-to-do middle class in England whose roots were already struck deep at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The industrial revolution brought them property and wealth and from one generation to another they clung to both tenaciously, watching them increase by natural growth, by fortunate investments, and by far-sighted intermarriages with wealthy families of their own caste. They were narrow, self-satisfied, grasping, and unconscious of social obligations in any broad sense. Soames, man of property, who adds to an inheritance already great, whose possessive passion extends from lands to houses, to pictures, and even to his wife, exemplifies the instinct of his class, and his defeat at the hands of his wife Irene prefigures the downfall of the social order of which he is a part.

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To the generation of Soames's daughter Fleur, the generation that has lived through the Great War and felt old ties loosed and social conventions flouted, Galsworthy turned to study further the evolution of the upper middle class. An unforeseen phenomenon greeted him. His social problem had ceased to be so arresting in its economic aspect and had become both arresting and frightening on its moral side. He beholds in Fleur the undying possessive passion of Soames and his forebears but diverted from the acquisition of property toward the gratification of merely social ambition, personal vanity, and even lust. The Decalogue has gone overboard and with it restraint, reverence, and even pity.

What is Galsworthy's attitude toward the two problems with which his overmastering interest in society confronts him? In *The Forsyte Saga* he implies with skilful irony and keen satire that conditions are economically impossible; in *A Modern Comedy* with irony no less skilful and satire no less keen he implies that they are morally chaotic. For the former he seems to have a nostrum. He speaks of art and says: "Art is the one form of human energy which really works for vision and destroys the barrier between man and man". About sixty years ago Matthew Arnold expressed similarly high hopes in the case of culture. It was going to assimilate what was "best in religion", provide yearning souls with an approach to God, turn the minds of the masses from a belief in "machinery", in coal mines and population, in railroads and exports, and transform them from Philistines to lovers of culture eager to make reason and the will of God prevail. There is a startling similarity between the nostrum suggested by Arnold and that advocated by Galsworthy, and it is as impossible to be sanguine of the one as it is of the other.

In *A Modern Comedy*, where the moral situation edges the economic conditions out of the limelight, it is through the lips of his most attractive character, Michael Mont, Fleur's husband, that Galsworthy speaks. Michael notes the self-consciousness of his generation, its poses, its affectation of cleverness, the joylessness which marks it, its restlessness, "the effort to escape from something that couldn't be got away from". Michael asks himself what his generation has put in the place of the things they discarded and finds no answer except, "We must be after something". When a son is born to Fleur and Michael they wonder in what creed they will bring him up. "Without faith", Michael asks himself, "was one fit to be a parent? Well, people were looking for faith again", but, warped as they were, would, he feared, fail to recover it. He talks it over with Fleur, but her bewilderment is scarcely less than his and in the end Fleur and Michael arrive nowhere.

And where does Galsworthy arrive? As a matter of fact he has no way out. To him life is a muddle and it is in an observation of one of his characters, Young Jolyon, that his philosophy is revealed: "To be kind, and keep your end up—there's nothing else in it". At the conclusion of *Swan Song* when Michael, aware that Fleur had played him false, seeks a brief refuge from his bewildering bitterness of soul out under the summer stars, he finds no thought to comfort him, no solution of the strange enigma of life.

Let us now turn to a consideration of Galsworthy as the artist in fiction. Without question we grant him the merits of a scrupulously careful craftsman, of an accomplished and resourceful stylist, of an ironist of the Addisonian tradition grown more obviously conscious, and finally the merit of a deep and sincere human sympathy. These assets have carried him far. It remains to ask: Have they carried him so far that *The For-*

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syte Saga is the finest work of fiction produced by any living British novelist? Do they seem to assure to Galsworthy a distinguished place in the attention of our great-grandchildren?

Galsworthy has lost his only serious rival among recent English novelists. Arnold Bennett did more than his share of ephemeral work and was too often deaf to the protests of his artistic conscience. Occasionally, however, he gave ear to it and turned his undoubted talents to good purpose. Once inspiration came to his aid; he drew upon every resource of experience and art at his command, and "with an impressiveness unmatched since Thackeray" (to borrow a judgment from Dean Cross) achieved his only masterpiece, *The Old Wives' Tale*. Here is a novel entirely unconcerned with those social problems which Galsworthy has always found absorbing and which occupy so large a place in the world's thought today. It boldly turns its back on our generation, and its historical high point is not the nineteen-hundreds but 1870. Its concerns are limited, personal, almost petty. It is (you remember) merely the chronicle of the childhood, youth, marriage, subsequent fortunes, and death of two sisters, and it is about the same length as the three novels that make up *The Forsyte Saga*. The personages of *The Old Wives' Tale* are no whit less selfish, narrow and self-centered than the figures in Galsworthy's saga. And yet there is a difference emphatic enough in treatment, but even more emphatic in the result accomplished. Neither by conscience nor by inclination was Bennett bedevilled into attempting two rôles; he is completely the novelist dedicated to an all-absorbing task, and not even by a stroke of the pen or a flicker of the eye is he a conscious critic of society. Not even in his mind did he have a divided aim, but the abundance of his own vitality flowed into his story and he achieved that mysterious blood transfusion by which, so to speak, a novelist who pretends to greatness must fill the veins of his creatures and transform them into independent entities who think, will, and act for themselves.

Galsworthy's men and women lack this vitality. Annette, Soames's second wife, is only a name; Bosinney and Irene are scarcely more vital than the fog into which Bosinney walks to his death. Others—most of the older Forsytes in fact—are brought nearer to a three-dimensional existence by the device of a pet interest or a pet phrase in the Dickens manner. It is on Soames and Fleur that Galsworthy lavishes his skill as a creator of character and the result is significant. Only in *The Man of Property* does Soames emerge from the shaping hands of the novelist and appear upon the retina of the mind's eye, a breathing human creature capable of thought and action. Throughout the five subsequent novels he becomes constantly less corporeal and it is only at occasional moments, as in *Swan Song* when he rescues his pictures from the burning gallery, that he steps out of the shadows into reality or when (ironic fact!) dying, alone with Fleur, who peers into his dulling eyes, he declines her offer to bring in the others; he wants *her*. As for Fleur, the most successfully drawn of all his characters, she achieves life of her own thanks to the device of presenting her through Soames's and Michael's eyes; and her eager, selfish heart, with its passion to possess, awakens her pulses to a living response. She overshadows Michael whose veins are warm only in her presence, and neither of the two develops, but both, in the manner of Dickens, remain static. It is a singular fact that Galsworthy's women more nearly approach reality than his men. A certain feminine element in him, no-

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ticed before, an unvirility, revealed in his style, from which Wells, Bennett, and Barrie (for all his fancifulness) are free, gets in the way, and the elements that go to the making of his men fail to cohere and to harden. (You are aware of this also in his best short stories, *The Apple Tree, The First and the Last,* and even in *A Stoic.*)

Of course the Forsytes are commonplace people, but commonplace people may be as real as one's own brothers and as fascinating to read about as queens or adventurers. The people in *Vanity Fair*, the greatest of English novels, are commonplace; they are Forsytes of an earlier generation. The people are commonplace in *David Copperfield*, in *The Mill on the Floss*, in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and in *The Old Wives' Tale*. It is not the quality of the people but life that is important and everlastingly fascinating, and even commonplace men and women can command our interest once the creative genius of the novelist awakens them to life.

Saintsbury says finely of Thackeray: "He could not introduce a personage, no matter how subordinate, without making him a living creature. He may be introduced to say a couple of lines, and never appear again, but Thackeray has no sooner touched him than there is a human being—an entity. He could not introduce a footman, saying some half-dozen words, 'My Lady is gone to Bright*ing*' or something of that sort, without presenting the fellow for his trouble with life and immortality".

Fundamentally Galsworthy's weakness, despite (to say it once more) his undeniable virtues, is vital. It is to be found in a phrase used by Henry James when he said that the supreme virtue of a novel was to "produce the illusion of life". That is the secret—"the illusion of life"—and it sanctions any method (Bennett's, Galsworthy's, Hardy's, or any other) which can perform the miracle of producing it. How the novelist shall achieve this, whether by the use of description, dialogue, or incident, in addition to the clearness of character, no one can say. That is a secret, as James pointed out, "between the novelist and his good angel". In what proportions his elements are mixed is no man's concern provided only the novelist "catch the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life". To demand this is to demand much. True! It is to demand what only the masters can give and what, when given, proves their genius. The greatest of British critics, paying tribute to the greatest of British romanticists, wrote: "All that portion of the history of his country that he has touched upon, the manners, the personages, the events, the scenery, lives over again in his volumes. Nothing is wanting—the illusion is complete. There is a hurtling in the air, a trampling of feet upon the ground, as these perfect representations of human character or fanciful belief come thronging back upon our imaginations. . . . His works, taken together, are almost like a new edition of human nature". And he adds, half between applause and envy: "This is indeed to be an author!"

Herein lies the secret of Galsworthy's failure to be a great novelist. In the phrase of Hazlitt and of Henry James, the "illusion of life" is wanting. At times we catch it as in that fine scene at Mrs. Magussie's rout in which the social duel between Fleur and Marjorie Ferrar reaches its climax and society takes its revenge on Fleur. Again we catch it in *Swan Song* when Fleur, denied an assignation by Jon, drinks to the dregs the bitterness of humiliation. But instances such as these are rare in Galsworthy. Not in his as in genuinely great novels, does the reader feel the tide of life flowing all about him, eddying at his feet, ebbing and returning, in never end-

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ing motion, like the sea. It is such a sense of life that Galsworthy attributes to Michael Mont; it is such an illusion of that life that his novels fail to provide.

The critics, deeply impressed by the many-sided talents of John Galsworthy, gentleman, have been highly generous to John Galsworthy, novelist. But in treating his works they have closed their eyes to the real function of fiction, and by emphasizing the wrong things have declared in effect that that function is to provide posterity with pictures of contemporary society rather than to create the illusion of life. Thus they have established the myth that Galsworthy, painstaking, conscientious, observant, with the temper of a critic and a propagandist rather than artist, is a great novelist.

But time will settle all that. We cannot, by a kind of mortmain, impose our idols on our grandchildren. Besides, our grandchildren may be too busy setting up idols of their own.

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A MEETING OF SOUTHERN WRITERS

by Donald Davidson

In reports appearing soon after the event, the gathering of Southern writers held in late October under the auspices of the University of Virginia was variously denominated "house party", "conference", "convocation", or—with even greater reserve—"occasion". Such a dubiety of terms reflects the hardship of the reporters, who must name a thing or perish beneath the editorial eye. But the meeting not only had no name. It was further dignified by having no program that would too severely afflict the guests with a sense of duty to art or to civilization. And perhaps it had no purpose—could have none, in fact, other than to bring the writers together under just the pleasant and stately circumstances that only Mr. Jefferson's university, possibly, could offer, and then to let happen what would. A great deal happened, both to the advantage and the pleasure of the guests. But it is no easier to interpret the gathering than to name it. I shall have to be reportorial rather than interpretative, circumstantial rather than speculative, in this account.

Some time ago, it seems, Ellen Glasgow complained to James Southall Wilson, Poe Professor at the University of Virginia, that Southern writers saw each other too rarely, and never under ideal circumstances. She wondered whether they might not be somehow assembled for the mutual benefits that closer acquaintance would give. Professor Wilson broached the matter to the late Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, president of the university. Out of Dr. Alderman's favourable consideration, and out of the work of Professor Wilson and an informal committee composed of Ellen Glasgow, James Branch Cabell, Archibald Henderson, DuBose Heyward, Stark Young, Thomas Wolfe, and Paul Green the gathering was brought to pass. Some thirty-odd Southern writers were invited to come to Charlottesville for a two-days' meeting which would be "experimental" and which would have "its main value in the opportunity for members of the group to talk with one another".

The large number of prompt acceptances was in itself an indication of the eagerness with which the idea was received—an eagerness all the more significant, perhaps, in view of the common tendency of authors to hold aloof from meetings and organizations. A few of those invited could not come. Those who attended were: Sherwood Anderson, Katharine Anthony, John Peale Bishop, James Boyd, Herschel Brickell, Mr. and Mrs. Struthers Burt, James Branch Cabell, Maristan Chapman (that is to say, Mary and Stanton Chapman, husband and wife, co-authors), Emily Clark, Donald Davidson, William E. Dodd, William Faulkner, Ellen Glasgow, Isa Glenn, Caroline Gordon (Mrs. Allen Tate), Paul Green, Archibald Henderson, Dorothy and DuBose Heyward, Mary Johnston, Ulrich B. Phillips, Josephine Pinckney, Alice Hegan Rice and Cale Young Rice, Amélie Rives (Princess Troubetzkoy), Mrs. Laurence Stallings,

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Allen Tate, and Irita Van Doren. A few others were in and out at moments—Andrew Nelson Lytle, Lawrence Lee, Agnes Rothery Pratt.

It will be noted that the list is a catholic one. As Miss Glasgow remarked, it was interesting to see "how elastic the term 'Southern writer' may become when properly stretched". For the list included occasional Southern residents as well as natives, emigrés like Sherwood Anderson, one or two expatriates, a sprinkling of Southern writers from distances as remote as Chicago and New York, historians and critics along with novelists and poets.

There were no formal proceedings, and there was only the bare minimum of parliamentary behaviour. A large Jeffersonian freedom prevailed, and Virginia hospitality, officially represented in the able persons of Professor Wilson, Mr. Stringfellow Barr, and their colleagues, was at its most gracious in providing opportunities for agreeable fellowship and talk rather than in busily dictating a schedule of arrangements. Nobody had to attend any of the gatherings, but most of the writers in fact did attend. There were three sessions at Madison Hall that might have been named "round table" discussions in a more formal convention. The other functions were for acquaintance' sake and not for art's—luncheons, teas, a dinner, trips to Castle Hill and Monticello, with much lounging and strolling between times.

Perhaps these latter occasions rather than the discussion meetings received the emphasis of memory in most of the authors' minds, as they looked back over a delightful and unusual experience. For anybody, anywhere, it is an unmatched pleasure to come to Virginia's halls. But for Southern writers to be first-comers there to such a meeting, with Virginia as host and presiding genius—I think this was something that could be properly savoured only by Southern authors. I do not imagine that they necessarily became any more conscious of themselves as Southerners. But, under the circumstances, even the most far-gone in "advanced" and modern views, even the most hard-boiled among them, might have been pardoned a moment's sentimentality towards their own South. How many realistic hearts may have been thus softened into an unexpected stirring of romantic loyalties, I do not pretend to know. In a company which represented such mixed views of Southern life as might be held, say, by Mary Johnston, Emily Clark, William Faulkner, and William E. Dodd, all was serene if not harmonious. Without needing to make any overt proclamation, all behaved pretty much as if they had some natural kinship in being Southern writers—though I should be hard put to say what it was they had in common other than the old Southern faculty of being at home with one's own place and people. At any rate, neither regionalism, nor sectionalism, nor other "isms" got much mention. Most of the sleeping dogs that have now and then growled in Southern councils dozed on unawakened.

The concerted discussions were not, however, without their animated—even their perilous—moments. A topic had been announced for general discussion: The Southern Writer and His Public. But Ellen Glasgow, in opening the meeting, discarded it at once, and went on to make a brilliant and witty address which argued, in general, for standards of Southern literature that would be universal, not parochial. "Because you are not only Southern writers, but world writers", she said (I owe the quotation to Emily Clark's good offices), "you bring to our literature the diversity which is life, not the standardization that is death". Her later dis-

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tinction between "the truth of life, the truth of history, and the truth of fiction" was caught up and argued pro and con by historians and artists—notably U. B. Phillips, Archibald Henderson, Mary Johnston, Allen Tate, and under the considerate chairmanship of DuBose Heyward, who held a loose parliamentary rein, the talk flowed on. Cale Young Rice spoke of the alarming extent to which book pages were being dropped by newspapers everywhere, and wondered whether anything could be done to preserve the spirit of local criticism.

Next day, as the discussions proceeded, it appeared that nothing could be done, though many shared Mr. Rice's solicitude and disliked the present channelling of literary communication through New York. At one point the writers were very nearly tempted into passing resolutions, but for one reason or another desisted. John Peale Bishop spoke wisely and temperately on the Southern tradition, which, he confessed, he had rediscovered as a stable, ordered way of life only after a considerable quest abroad. James Boyd supported Mr. Bishop's views. But Paul Green railed tempestuously against any idea of fixity and praised the agencies in his own State—North Carolina—that had dislocated the Southern tradition and brought it into a progressive stride—such agencies as automobiles, public education, tobacco manufactures. He fervently declared that "any little runt who is driving a high-powered car at sixty miles an hour is going toward God".

William E. Dodd answered Mr. Green with a calm assurance that he need not worry—the machine age was dead—the depression was its dying agony—there would be machines in the future, but not a machine age.

These were notable passages in the discussion meetings. But hot though they threatened to become, they were hardly passages-at-arms, they represented no more than the healthy freedom of speech which Mr. Jefferson's ghost would have commended. Much else was said of the wise, the witty, the pleasant, by others present; and still others who might have said much, joined Mr. Cabell in a discreet silence.

To what end at last, who could tell? It would be wisest, I think, to draw no more positive conclusions than Josephine Pinckney in *The Saturday Review* and Emily Clark in *Books* have already drawn. I agree with them that the best feature of the meeting was the lack of self-consciousness on the part of the guests. It was a great comfort not to see anything pretentiously "arty". The gathering did not, it could not, in the least resemble the meetings of the editorial staffs of *Broom* or *Secession* (lately reported in *The New Republic*), or of the average poetry society, or of any authors' league whatsoever. However, these are negative conclusions. I have no general and positive observations to add, except to hazard a guess that the readiness of the various writers, even though they represented discordant views of art and hostile practices, to get along together like old friends argues something for a real community of interest among Southern authors—a community which time, and maybe later meetings, will strengthen rather than diminish. Besides this, the very fact itself of the meeting, the joy which the writers took in coming together, the satisfaction which they found in such informal intercourse—all this suggests that New York, as a literary capital, is ruinously defective in not providing similar natural opportunities, and it promises, perhaps, a decentralization which may in time work considerable changes in the literary complexion of the United States.

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WRITER'S CRAMP

by One of the Afflicted

I WANT to talk about the joys of creation, because I have just created something. There is no other joy equal to this.

To feel, stirring in the depths of one's soul, the first small bud of an idea; to watch it grow, almost of itself, until under the warm rays of one's imagination it blossoms into the semblance of what, after pain and effort, one's own hands and mind shall make it; to clip and work and sweat and whittle at that image until it becomes real, and tangible, and capable of being understood by others—a work of art, without its fellow in all the world; to rise from long, lonely labour and look at it, and say, "Creation of my brain and fingers, thou art finished; go forth and prosper and delight the children of men"—the joys of eating and making love and lying in the sun are as nothing to such joys as these.

The only thing wrong with this picture is that I am by profession a writer, and that what I have just finished, what gave me such exquisite pleasure to imagine and work over and bring to perfection was not a poem, an essay or a novel, but a small wooden boat with three masts and some sails made of sheets of 8½ x 11 typewriting paper.

Stories about how writers work are always interesting, so I shall go on to tell you that the idea for the boat came to me while I was trying to compose a scholarly article for Seward Collins on the decline of the realistic novel. I had covered a page with what I call "notes"—namely illegible scribblings of headings and sub-headings, the word "realistic" written thirteen times in different types of lettering, and some drawings of bearded peasants and unusual fish. This went on for an hour and a half. At eleven fifteen I clenched my jaws, took a fresh sheet of paper, wrote "The Decline of the Realistic Novel" firmly at the top of the page, and leaned back in my chair for a moment's rest. After I had been so resting for about half an hour, I seized this fresh page, and the page of "notes", and crumpled them both up into a round ball and hurled them into a corner of the room, which is a sort of attic-carpentry-shop-studio, full of tools and odd pieces of wood.

One of these pieces of wood was of such a size and shape as to appeal to something deep down inside me, and I was at once attacked by a fit of creativeness. I whittled one end into a prow, and hacked the other into something like a stern, and bored three holes down the middle and stuck masts into the holes, and fitted typewriting paper over the masts, and by lunch time (I did not hear the bell, which I always do when I am writing) I had a nice little square-rigged schooner. After lunch, to be sure, the children began playing with it, and it tipped over and the masts broke off and the sails disintegrated and floated away, but I did not care—I had known the joys of creation and that was enough for me.

Those among my readers who are readers only will think this all very silly, but those

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of you who are writers also will sympathize and admit that you all have similar moments of boatmaking in your otherwise hardworking lives. And we writers will put our heads together in a confidential huddle and confess, to none but professional ears, that writing is one of the least self-rewarding of man's many ways of satisfying his immortal hunger, that writing is much more often than not a colossal bore, a hideous torture beside which a half-hour in the dentist's chair is sheer relaxation; and that most of us would rather do anything than write, and seek a thousand grotesque excuses to avoid or postpone that which, at bottom, we would rather do than anything else. It is an incurably vicious circle—we hate writing, and the more we hate it the harder it is to write, and the less we write the more we hate ourselves for not being able to do it, and the more we do it the more we hate it.

I envy the other professions, and am jealous of them. How pleasant it would be to sit in an architect's office, and sketch, with a light, sure pencil, beautiful plans and elevations; how solidly satisfactory to juggle cultures in test tubes and examine their contents under microscopes and say, this is scarlet fever and that is chicken-pox; how delightful to let one's mind, like a ferret, find loopholes in the law of corporate finance; how thrilling to draw a ribbon of horse-hair across some pieces of stretched catgut and produce marvellously beautiful sounds. My reason tells me that the architect and the lawyer and the physician submit to years of gruelling preliminary training and apprenticeship, and that the violinist must go on practising two or three hours a day until he dies; my mind knows that buildings are torn down, that patients recover, that verdicts are reversed on appeal, that concert audiences go home and play backgammon, while what I write has some chance—physically at any rate—of enduring and of coming to life again in later years. But this comparative permanence, and the facts that writing requires no capital, no office space, no laboratory and no Stradivarius, that a writer with a stub pencil and a schoolboy's composition book is never out of work, that his work can be done anywhere and at any time—such blessings often seem to me to be outweighed by the dreadful necessity, hourly and daily before the writer, of self-excavation, of making his living off that vacuum which is his own mind, of sending down buckets into the well of his own being, and the constant fear that those buckets will come up from the bottom dry.

There have been, of course, writers who took the delight in putting words on paper that I took in fitting toy masts to my piece of wood. From genius the living flame spurts out irrepressible and wild. Lesser men, but good craftsmen and worthy figures in literature too, there have been who could sit down to the daily task with chronic fluency and relish. With something like veneration I think of Walter Scott, who wrote before his guests had arisen and spent the rest of the day with them; of Trollope, who, if he finished one novel at six-thirty A.M. began another in the half-hour that remained before breakfast. I also confess myself impressed by the almost diarrhoeic powers of Edgar Wallace, who can dictate, if need be, twenty or thirty thousand salable words in one day. But I am convinced that the great bulk of what may be called conscientious artists in words, lying between the extremes of volcanic genius on the one hand and Edgar Wallace on the other, are more often than not made miserable by the exercise of their chosen craft. Chekhov said that he went about "oppressed by the constant knowledge that he

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must write, write", and the famous speech of his Trigorin (a character in *The Sea Gull*) is the most eloquent expression of a novelist's obsession, or writer's spiritual cramp, on record. Joseph Conrad repeatedly avowed his pains of labour, his nausea, and his distaste for his works as he was writing them. Once in my hearing a ship news reporter asked him which of his own novels was his favourite. I shall never forget his reply—indeed I often take consolation from it when contemplating my own miscellaneous litter of brain-puppies—"My books have cost me too much for me to have a favourite among them".

The women of this world are always boasting that they have one definite superiority over the men—the men never have to undergo the sublime and awful torment of childbirth, and are by that much—so say the women—the poorer in strength, experience, and knowledge of the deeper mysteries of life. O women of this world, consider the lowly writer, and admit him to your sex's sorority of pain. For many a writer his life-work is one long uninterrupted childbirth—childbirth on a less noble scale than yours, ladies, but in a number of ways even more pitiable. For when his brain-child is finally born, others do not praise it just because it is his, as are praised the sons and daughters of women. And for him no anaesthetic, no friendly impassive surgeon lightens the agony of accomplishment. The novel, the play, the poem that will not come right, that will not suffer its author to write Finis upon it, cannot be lifted from the author's interior and be caused triumphantly to appear before an expectant world by a literary Caesarian operation. And the pains do not foreshadow the happy ending, but accompany the whole business from the very start. Even the pleasures of conception are not comparable, and the author's mind knows no book control: hardly is one novel born than another is already seething in his mind, and clawing his insides with its embryonic chapters.

These pains, for want of a more accurate medical term, I shall call writer's cramp. If I speak of them, and attempt to indicate their causes, their symptoms, their alleviations and the peculiar evasions and dodges they produce in the victim, it must necessarily be a somewhat subjective account. The malady has not often been scientifically described. When the psychologists are through trying to explain why bright children are brighter than dull children, perhaps they can be tempted into this most interesting and unexplored field of the pathology of authorship. I offer them the record of my own case, which often strikes me as bordering on insanity, but which is, when compared to many others I have heard of, not really abnormal at all. I am merely a writer and must suffer accordingly.

To the question, What do I want to do with my life? my intelligence, repeatedly self-questioned, supplies only one answer: I want to write. I have a gift for stringing words together. And I am notably unfitted to do anything else, in spite of recurrent longings to make plans of houses, to draw beautiful and accurate maps, to dig ditches, to sing songs in public places, and to whittle boats out of odd pieces of wood. Even at this last avocation, the only one in which my performance is at all creditable, I am a hopeless though enthusiastic dub. Everything, then, conspires to make me a writer. Yet most of the time something in me deeper than my intelligence says that I do not want to write, and hates the effort of doing so. If a long-lost uncle were to come along and give me a million dollars, it is quite likely that I would never write another word for

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the rest of my life. It is equally possible that, no matter how endowed, the itch to write—though I wrote not a word—would survive sudden and accidental wealth. I am afraid of writing. I have sought to analyze that fear, and I think I now know what it is made of. I am afraid of writing something very bad, or something that nobody will buy and publish. And any writer, from long experience, is afraid, nay certain, that his translation of the image in his mind into words will not do that image justice. But deeper than that is a profound shyness at the mere act of writing, which is the act of looking into oneself and seeing what is there. So often nothing is there at all. That is why I am afraid—though I have known times when the bucket came up brimming and overflowing, and I drank of it and it was good. Mixed in with these fears is my fear of the still small voice within me which says, "No, what you are writing now is tripe". A voice which one day seems a friendly advisory voice, a critic on the hearth of my soul, chiding, chirping, but chirping warmly; and another day the black croak of negation and despair, the hoarse caw of the very raven of defeat.

If the disease itself is deep-seated, secret, and intangible, the symptoms, alas, are plain enough. They consist largely of evasions, and excuses, and impossible demands upon the external world. Physical conditions, says the writer to himself, must be just so, or I can't function. And unconsciously he watches for, nay longs for, heat, noise and interruptions which, if violent enough, will give him the justification to say to himself, "I cannot possibly write under such conditions, so I will walk out into the park and watch the green grass grow instead". And as he strolls through the park, thinking of anything else but the article that must be finished, the novel that must be begun, in the back of his head is the delusion—a delusion that never dies—that somehow this stroll through the park, with its pleasant glimpses of baby carriages, squirrels and Irish policemen, will give him inspiration in his work, and the fortitude to go on with it when he gets back to his desk again.

I could write a thick medico-pathological treatise on the kind of noise that annoys an author. In my own case familiar noises, or noises with a human-interest plot, are much more destructive of creative concentration than the generalized uproar of a great modern city, no matter how hideously concocted of elevated trains, coal trucks, bad automobile brakes and impatient claxons. The smaller noises within one's own household are much more to be feared. Somewhere down the hall, for instance, a bell rings. For some minutes no one answers it. I do not have to answer it. It is probably only the grocer's delivery boy, or a young man who is making his way through college by selling subscriptions to magazines. In any case it does not matter. But for minutes my mental machinery stops, and I sit wondering if the doorbell is going to be answered or if it will ring again. And, when writing in the country, the distant happy cries and barkings of one's own children and one's own dogs are worse than all the riveting in the world. They remind me that out there in the sunlight under the trees, real life is going on, while all I am doing is sitting here and writing about it.

Better, better far than a sound-proof room is a sound-proof mind. There are moments when I am so interested in what I am writing that no interruption, short of an invitation to hold up my hands and stand with my face to the wall, has power to distract me. This kind of concentration is accidental, spas-

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modic, and has no relation whatever to the quality of what I may be writing. I realize that other writers are marvellously endowed with the capacity for self-absorption. Owen Davis, for example, says that he has often written on the top of a trunk. I have seen many of his plays, and of not a few of them I can readily believe this. Nevertheless I deeply envy him this ability not to be defeated by the material hazard of a trunk. I think I would really rather be able to write, as can Owen Davis, practically standing on my head, than be able to write somewhat better than he does under conditions of my own choosing.

I have often thought of questioning the window cleaner about the reactions of authors when he knocks at their doors with his pail and his sponge and his safety belt. I for one, when the window cleaner appears, pretend to be annoyed. Yet I do not chase him away. With a gesture of feigned despair, but with vast secret relief, I rush out of the room, and go downstairs and bury my nose in the *New Yorker*, at bottom tickled to death that I have, through no fault of my own, gained a respite of ten or fifteen minutes.

The matter of temperature would be a chapter in my treatise on writer's cramp. There must surely be a degree in the thermometer which is, for purposes of brain work, absolutely perfect, but I have never found it. I am not alone in this high sensitivity. Another writer with whom I was talking about this point said: "I find it very difficult to work in a cold climate—and practically impossible to work in a warm one". So there you are. No climate, no weather, no balance of transom and window, of draft and mephitic calm, will satisfy the writer. Because if he could be satisfied he would have no excuse left for not working, or for finding work difficult and himself a victim of circumstances.

Notes for three other important chapters in the treatise:

(1) "Cold Engine." Like an old T-model Ford, the literary mind, when about to begin its daily stint, has to be primed and coaxed, and have a warm rag put over its carburetor, and have one of the rear wheels jacked up from the floor. Or, to change the metaphor, a writer is a timid diver standing on the edge of a springboard in the early morning. He has been in the water before, every day of his life, and he has never yet been drowned or eaten by sharks, but each time he gets ready to plunge into the rigours of creative activity he shivers and postpones. What excuses for not plunging do not amiably present themselves at that moment! I sit down, ready for the day's work. I know what I am going to write. I have had a good night's sleep. The pencil-sharpener is working nicely. The paper stretches out smooth and virgin before me. But I cannot begin. Instinctively I look around for something which might genuinely prevent me from beginning. I always find it. It may be two dogs in the street, sniffing at each other and bristling as they sniff. If there's going to be a dog fight it would interrupt me. I'd better wait until it's over. . . . Or it is a blot on the blotter, which must absolutely be connected by a pencil line with another blot before I can get down to business. . . . Or it is a spot on my tie. . . .

(2) "Parting of the Film." This is even more serious than Cold Engine, because more mysterious. I have changed my tie, connected the blots, separated the dogs, and finally started writing, and I have been writing industriously for an hour or more. I know what I want to say, and how to say it. Suddenly my hand stops, and my brain with it.

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I mean *stops*, like a cheap watch that suddenly goes blooey and stops ticking. The impulse has run out. The film has parted. Usually it is some time before it can be glued together again. There is absolutely no reason that I can discover for the accident. I sincerely want to go on writing, but I can't.

(3) "The Knapsack." A knapsack that cannot be taken off one's back. Many writers wear it twenty-four hours of the day. It is the burden of one's work that rests on one's shoulders whether one is working or not. An obsession of a quite useless nature; the thought of one's work without the thinking about it. For this variety of the general malady I know only one cure, and that not a sure one: four fingers of straight whiskey every twenty minutes until one is taken home and put to bed by unknown friends.

The disease, with all these variants and symptoms, has strange ways of completely disappearing at times. There are moments when the Conscious, working with brain and fingers, seems to have established a direct pipe-line connection with something strong and inexhaustible way down in the neighbourhood of one's guts, and words, words, not such bad words either, come gushing up faster than one can put them down. At last! one cries. The great torment and uncertainty are over; I have struck oil. But the next day, when one sits down at one's desk and hopefully turns on the faucet, there is only an empty hissing gurgle; the oil has run away into the secret sands again, and is only to be pumped up, a thimbleful at a time, with sweat and effort, with lapses and interruptions, with the demands upon one's faltering attention of all the dogs that are going to fight in the street, the bells that may not be answered, the blots that must be connected, the ties that simply have to be changed. And then how one longs for that window cleaner to knock on the door and make work physically impossible as well as mentally so.

I believe I could write a book upon the difficulties and impossibilities of writing books. It would be so much more fun than writing the books themselves. I have enjoyed writing as brief a fragment as this, and it came fairly easily, for confession is always easier than the accomplishment of either sin or virtue. But even this confession has not been unaccompanied by some of the usual symptoms of writer's cramp. This morning, in this attic workshop where I write and, at times, make boats also, it began to rain. Yes, it rained in the attic. The water came through the skylight and began drip-dripping onto the floor. There was no danger of flood. It could rain and drip for a week without my work being in serious danger. But the disease asserted itself. I stopped in the middle of a sentence, and got up, and wandered about, and found an old mug and put it under one of the drips, and a flower-pot and put it under another, yet still there was a third drip, and after a prolonged search I found a glass jar that had once held hard candies, and soon all the drips began plop-plopping into these elegant vessels. And whenever a difficulty presented itself in the writing, whenever the *mot juste* failed to appear, I would look at the flower-pot or the hard candy jar and wonder how soon it was going to overflow, and what I ought to do about it when it did. It was fun, somehow, a relaxation from work as well as an excuse for interrupting it. More fun, in a way, than the work. In my next incarnation I hope to be allowed to do nothing but make wooden boats and put jars under the drips from attic skylights. It is the kind of work I could perform with pleasure and without cramp.

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PAUL GREEN

by Julian R. Meade

PAUL GREEN is almost alone among Southern writers in that he was intelligently appreciated at home before he was acclaimed by the outside world, before Broadway and Broadway's critics had heard of him. His talent was first recognized in his native State, where his earliest plays were staged by the Carolina Playmakers while he was a student; the first play he ever saw produced was of his own creation, a one-act piece concerning love between a Southern belle and a Yankee captain. While he was still an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina, the founder of the Carolina Playmakers, Frederick Koch, encouraged him to write of the farmers and Negroes among whom he had lived and with whom he had worked in the fields in summertime.

The Last of the Lowries, White Dresses, The Old Man of Edenton, and other folk-dramas were a beginning of what Paul Green foresaw as a "story to be gradually written down of my home folks, black and white". His "story" has gone far along its way. He is now thirty-seven, and fourteen years of authorship have passed since a printer in Greenville, South Carolina, charged him seventy dollars to publish thirty leather pamphlets of verses called *Trifles of Thought.* The title was appropriate, for this poetry was youthful and immature. The poet was going to war and the slender volume was a legacy—if he should not return.

But he did return. Without saying much of what he had seen and felt on the Belgian front, he resumed his academic tasks and in leisure hours devoted himself to the creative work he had planned before the war. The tales (later collected in the volume *Wide Fields*) began with a story that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*; a remarkable delineation of Negro character convinced some readers that Paul Green was another coloured boy who had joined the literary coteries of Harlem. Some of these stories, as well as such plays as *The Prayer Meeting* and *Sam Tucker*, were expressions of the black man's pitiable struggles in a white man's world. The Negro's disheartening attempt to broaden his horizon was the theme, too, of the one-act version of *In Abraham's Bosom* which was later lengthened into the tragedy that won the Pulitzer Prize—after being rejected by almost every producer in New York.

In Abraham's Bosom, with all the attendant publicity of the award, did not bring Paul Green nearly so many admirers as has *The House of Connelly,* produced last fall by the Group Theatre under the auspices of the Theatre Guild. Seldom has a fine play been more enthusiastically received. The story of the Connellys—the conflict between the old South and the new, between decadent aristocracy and ambitious peasantry—creates the arresting illusion of life that one always hopes for and seldom finds in the theatre. It is an old story, but Paul Green has told it with a moving sincerity that is wholly his own.

There has been a note of irony in certain

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comparisons provoked by *The House of Connelly*. Numerous critics have seen a likeness between this drama of the South and *The Cherry Orchard*. This has seemed inexplicable to Paul Green, who has not numbered Chekhov among his literary preferences nor read much of the Russian's work. And it was inevitable, perhaps, that people should say Eugene O'Neill is no longer the only American dramatist of real importance. A pertinent fact is that Eugene O'Neill was one of the early enthusiasts of Paul Green's less known folk-plays and that he read and commended *In Abraham's Bosom* before it was produced. The older playwright recognized the young Southerner's talent and admired him for disregarding safe and conventional models. And, for those who wonder what Paul Green thinks of *Mourning Becomes Electra* and other plays, his own estimate may be given. "I admire tremendously those of Mr. O'Neill's plays that came before *The Great God Brown*," he says. "But I am not stirred by his later development into what seems to me a realm of pseudo-metaphysics, psychology, and formulism."

Even if neither dramatist is moved by the other's recent work, a sympathy between them can be understood; both chose the arduous way of defying traditional patterns and valuing sincerity more than the public's pleasure.

II

Although the South has never been very hospitable to protesting voices and uncommemorative pens, it happens that the most important and, one is tempted to say, the most liberal Southern authors have remained at home. It is commonly known, for instance, that Miss Glasgow and Mr. Cabell are isolated figures in what Emily Clark has truthfully termed "one of the most gregarious and unliterary of American cities"; Mrs. Peterkin and Mr. DuBose Heyward have stayed where, as an old Charlestonian insists with blatant pride, they have not won half the esteem that is accorded Mr. Archibald Rutledge, who has not seen black as a decorous colour. And Paul Green, at Chapel Hill, has not strayed far from his birthplace near Lillington, North Carolina, where he is known as "Paul" rather than as a distinguished writer, where he has many kinsfolk, some of whom, he says, "are the sorriest people I have ever met and some the finest North Carolina has produced".

The University of North Carolina—or "Chapel Hill" as it is termed in the South—is wisely proud to have the dramatist as professor of philosophy and hopes that he will not be interested in lucrative offers from wealthier institutions. But Paul Green says there is little likelihood of his leaving the place that his wife and two children love as much as he does. Knowing the strong ties between him and his own people, one doubts that he will do much roaming. Travelling abroad on a Guggenheim fellowship and studying at Cornell do not seem to have disturbed his deep-set roots. He is one of those writers who are most vividly impressed by early environment and adolescent memories. Although his characters are imaginary, the Negroes and country folk whom he knew as a boy are not unlike the people of his stories and plays. He finds a vital inspiration in old associations and is glad that time and fortune have brought little estrangement between him and the farmers with whom he has toiled at cotton-picking and harvesting—labours that rewarded him with physical strength and enabled him better to understand those who are, he says, "the men whom God and enlightenment have forgot".

In the lovely town of Chapel Hill interest

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in "Paul" is not confined to his writing. He is one of the most popular and influential professors on the campus. As teacher of philosophy he is not solely preoccupied with the ancients and their ideas; he is concerned with stimulating awareness of current affairs and the philosophy underlying the literature of Dostoievski, Tolstoy, and Hardy. Above all, he strives to promote independent thinking among his students. Boys who doubtless know little of American drama could tell you that Professor Green is an excellent tennis player and can pitch baseball well with either hand.

Paul Green has many enthusiasms. He loves music, and folk-music in particular. He and John Powell serve on the advisory committee of the University of North Carolina Institute of Folk-Music and are labouring to bring indigenous music before young composers. He has sponsored two Negro quartets: the Silver Tongues, who are coloured brothers, and the Lily Whites, who are coloured sisters. He thinks there is not much entertainment better than a concert of Negro spirituals and ballads, or old-time fiddling. When he arranges an informal party for James Boyd, Barrett Clark, Wilbur Daniel Steele, Susan Glaspell, Emily Clark, Percy MacKaye, or any other of his numberless visitors, he calls in some banjo players or Negro songsters. One of his favourite performers is a Negro who plays with thimble-tipped fingers upon a galvanized iron washboard to which are attached cowbells, automobile horns, gourds and tin cans. For an evening's diversion what could be more delightful than a program by Bad Eye, a gnarled black philosopher who has an amazing repertoire and an inimitable style of story-telling? Bad Eye has decided and strikingly original opinions on everything from the current depression to the judgments of God.

From Negroes like Bad Eye and the garrulous coloured parson who does odd jobs for the Greens when not engaged upon evangelical labours, Paul Green has learned much about human nature. His understanding of the black race and his musical gift account for some of the fine songs that are found among his plays. When Paul Robeson saw *In Abraham's Bosom* he asked the playwright where he got one of the Negro songs. "Oh, I reckon maybe I wrote that myself," Paul Green smiled. The selection that caught the singer's fancy was but one of many excellent songs and ballads that Paul Green has written. With the help of the North Carolina musician, Lamar Stringfield, he has composed such characteristic folk-studies as "Tread, Tread the Green Grass", "Hail Sweet Jesus Immanuel", "In de Cold Earth de Sinful Clay", "I Will Arise", and "Done Sold My Soul to de Devil".

His versatility and capacity for work are little short of magic. In a brief space of time he has written many short and long plays, stories, essays, poems, and songs, and now he is writing a novel. He says that he writes easily when his method is subjective, as in *In Abraham's Bosom*, and with considerable difficulty when his method is objective, as in *The House of Connelly*. He works whenever he has free hours; the first version of his long drama, *The Field God,* which was presented in both New York and London, was completed in four days; some of his one-act plays have been done in a single evening. Once he was called by a friend at two o'clock in the morning and asked if he could have a comedy ready within six days for the opening of the university's State-owned theatre. "Lawd, I reckon I can do it," he drawled sleepily. And *Doctor Emanuel*, a colourful comedy by Paul Green, was on the first program of the Playmakers' Theatre.

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III

Like most contemporary Southern writers, Paul Green has not always been reverent toward certain objects of commemoration and consequently has offended some conventional minds. He has had sermons addressed to him by country parsons who had not been satisfied with the "moral standards" of his work, work which they usually had heard of rather than read. "Young man," roared one embattled evangelist, looking the author straight in the eye, "all your book-learnin' and studyin' won't do you any good till you come to Jesus." One can easily think of Southerners whom organized Fundamentalists might more justifiably rebuke, for, in all seriousness, Paul Green has been singularly respectful of orthodox and absolute beliefs and has marvelled at the power of simple faith. He is a tolerant man; he can smile without resentment when reprehended by professing Christians; he has not even taken refuge in satire.

It is literary, rather than religious, matters that have aroused most indignation toward the dramatist in some unforgettable instances. Once, in an address before a North Carolina woman's club, he confessed that he found North Carolina's history barren of art and North Carolina's O. Henry more amusing than moving. "North Carolina has made no lasting contribution to the art of the world. . . . True, we've had O. Henry in the short story and have named cigars, drug stores, mattresses, candies, and hotels after him, but still, if I may say so, he remains for me a man without a vision, not a great writer, his life seeming in itself to be much more significant than his books." This incredible opinion was no sooner uttered than some irate ladies departed in protest. Others lingered to tell the speaker that they wished no good either for him or his work. In fairness to the ladies it must be said that Paul Green was somewhat ahead of his time. Southern professors had said that O. Henry was a genius and the ladies had believed them. As for Paul Green's own work, surely there had been nothing in Mr. Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus or Mr. Page's darkies to prepare the Southerner for Paul Green's Abraham any more than for Mr. Heyward's Mamba or Mrs. Peterkin's Scarlet Sister Mary.

It has already been said that Paul Green was first appreciated in his native State—and this notwithstanding the women's clubs. For there were discerning people who knew he was interpreting an alien race with astounding, if "ungentlemanly", candour. His friend, Thomas Wolfe, recalls that even as a college student Paul Green was concerning himself with paths that were forbidden and unexplored, that even then he was amazingly far-seeing and mature. Yet he never made a self-conscious gesture. In him there was nothing of the aloof and unsocial intellectual. Though he was never a back-slapping collegian, he was interested in people and was affable and kind. Today he has not changed, except that he has grown wiser and surer of his talent. He is disdainful of all forms of conceit and affectation. He was surprised when a writer said that he had a high-brow attitude toward the professional theatre; as an artist, he works for what he calls the "art theatre" but he thinks it natural that the masses should prefer a theatre that is purely entertaining. Personally, as a spectator, he enjoys vaudeville performances and thinks an evening at the old Hipprodrome was excellent pastime.

There is something unmistakably sincere about Paul Green: his natural and unassuming manner, his friendly interest, his boyish smile, his decidedly Southern speech. Listening to him, one wishes that the actors of his

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plays could imitate his "I reckon" and "you-all" as he pronounces them in a soft and indolent voice.

If Paul Green had felt the same spirit of revolt and desire of escape that certain young American writers have expressed or if he had concerned himself with what one might inadequately call "sophistication" he probably would not have become the man he is today. He seems to have understood that whatever he might achieve as an artist indubitably would be owed to his feeling for his own people and his understanding of a common heritage. At the outset of his career he was convinced that an artist must keep to what is his own. Today he clings to that conviction and still hopes that American drama may come to be more than a name. "Our playwrights from Thomas Godfrey down", he says, "have written about all possible subjects, and many of them have done good plays, but in no instance that I know of has anyone yet spoken for America as Tolstoy and even Chekhov spoke for the vast and troubled soul of Russia."

America, too, he realizes, is vast and troubled and the American artist can only speak for her by revealing his own fragment of her civilization; it is for the artist to make his fragment of universal interest. As he writes in his forest workshop, watching thoughtfully as the seasons change colour in the undergrowth beneath the dark pines, Paul Green has before him the picture of a smaller world that in real essentials is not always unlike the greater world that stretches far beyond the mountains and cornfields of Carolina. It has been his intention to see clearly and to relate truthfully the history of this smaller world—an intention that has already been memorably revealed. And, after all, Paul Green is only thirty-seven.

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A POET OF THE NEW TURKEY

by Nermine Mouvafac

The corner shop at the lower end of Bab'ali, the Avenue of the Sublime Porte, sells His Master's Voice gramophones, and just outside taxis stand and hoot. A little further up there are dingy eating-places, their windows containing rows of sheep-heads hideously grinning and festoons of eggs and lemons, with here and there a tomato for colour. Then the bookshops begin. They are perhaps the smallest bookshops in the world, barring those of the *bouquinistes* near Notre-Dame, and their few feet of glass front display the diminutive books of modern Turkey—for this period of transition from Arabic to Latin characters is the time neither for de luxe editions nor for lengthy and long-thought-out works. But inside there are probably treasures upon treasures—illuminated Korans, ancient chronicles of which there may be only two or three copies in existence, early Karageuz plays, the divans of the great poets, uncut numbers of the first published magazines and newspapers, and so down through the decades to the novels of Halidé Edib, almost all of which are now exceedingly difficult to find and not likely to be reprinted in the immediate future.

Higher still are the newspaper offices, located up hazardous steps in buildings where the floors tremble and the windows shake with every new page that is printed. There is one in what used to be an old *medresseh*, a religious school, its printing-press overlooking a little garden full of trees and grass, seemingly suspended in mid-air. Past here the street curves violently up the hill, making a right angle with itself. Then it begins to change until it finally ends in brilliant manner a short distance from Santa Sophia Square, beside the little enclosed cemetery where the great of the land are buried. This upper brilliant end has seen the making and unmaking of many destinies—the signing of treaties, the deposing of grand vizirs, declarations of war and of peace, upheavals and their quelling, the splendour of an empire and its fall. Today it is but little reminiscent of its past; the processions of inflamed janissaries and the coaches of ambassadors going to seek audience at the Sublime Porte have been replaced by parades of school children on national holidays.

But though the upper end of Bab'ali has long since lost its historical significance the lower end is still the center of literary activity. Here the poets, novelists and journalists of the day walk and work and eat and discuss the universe. And here in their little musty shops the publishers sit drinking tea out of Persian glasses. They are a kindly lot, as publishers go, eager to give young people a start if unable to pay them vast sums. There are those among them who have given up more remunerative professions for the pleasure of sitting here among books, talking books all day long. It seems a quiet enough world, and yet ideas—a strange intermingling of the classic arrogance of years ago, the romantic pessimism of yesterday and the chaotic vitality of today—are being constantly passed

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NAZIM HIKMET

from one to the other. Nor is it only a world of ideas; for outside people buy food and drink and gramophones, have their shoes shined on the sidewalk and are sometimes involved in automobile accidents.

Against this setting may be seen almost any day a tall young man with impressive shoulders and equally impressive strides, a strong chin, clear blue eyes and fair hair, usually wearing the cloth cap which in his mind is a symbol of the proletariat. He is Nazim Hikmet, communist poet, perhaps the only poet of the new generation who will leave a lasting mark.

He comes of a cultured family, well-off in his early days but since reduced in means. His father was Director of the Press. His mother was a painter, beautiful and charming as well as talented. They named him after his grandfather, Nazim Pasha, then a governor in the provinces. He spent most of his childhood with this grandfather, who was something of a scholar and used to read Persian poetry to him by the light of a tall candle long hours at a time. The boy could not understand a word, but his ears were filled with the music. From his mother he received his introduction to European literature. She read a great deal, was full of ideas and eager to impart them, and was the chief influence on her son's young mind.

At thirteen Nazim was writing poetry. At sixteen he published it. In 1921—he was then nineteen—he and three friends made their escape from Istanbul, then under the Allied Occupation, to the interior. They were going to take part in the War of Independence—to help save the country and also, they hoped, the people for whom the country was being saved. They were not soldiers, they "wrote". There was going to be a great rebirth and they wanted to be of it. There was adventure afoot, and they weren't going to miss that:

There's a raid on,
there's a raid!
We are going to conquer the sun,
the sun's conquest is soon to be made!

They walked from Inebolu, on the Black Sea coast, to Angora. It was a long walk—some ten days—through part of the country where Nazim had spent his childhood and which was now tense with expectation. They offered their services to the Kemalists, and two of the four, Nazim and Vala Nurettin, a young journalist, were appointed as teachers to Bolu—a little town on one of the great Anatolian plains, bounded on all sides by mountains.

In Bolu they lived for three months in a huge empty han, in their minds a fit setting for a Poe story. There were stables below, and all night long people would be going and coming, changing horses. They read Baudelaire and Verhaeren and talked sociology and felt that they were helping to regenerate Turkey. They also realized how much there was to be done. They were

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NAZIM HIKMET IN COURT

A scene taken last summer, during the most recent of his trials. The woman on the extreme right is a fellow poet.

discovering a new world, a Turkey not dreamt of back in Istanbul. The things which Nazim now had to say could be fitted into neither the old complicated Arabic metres nor the too simple and too regular rhythms which had gradually come to replace them in Turkish literature. Nazim Hikmet threw out all these forms and experimented until he had evolved a rhythm of his own. The form which he created, a mingling of long or "static" and short or "dynamic" lines with a rich interplay of rhymes, was something new and important in the evolution of the language. It was within a few years to place Nazim Hikmet among epoch-makers.

But at the time there were more pressing problems than the creation of landmarks in literature to consider. Back in Angora, Nazim and Vala fell in with a group of Marxists and said good-bye to Baudelaire and rhythmical experiments. They plunged with enthusiasm into all the theories which were being aired in the Kemalist city. The nights were spent in endless passionate discussions of possible forms of government for the future, in attempts to solve the problems not only of Turkey but of the whole world. Nazim—going on now to twenty—was an out-and-out anarchist. What he wanted was nothing less than a clean start in everything. If it had been possible to clear the whole world's surface with one bomb, he would have thrown that bomb.

Those were splendid days. The two friends wandered, walking and talking, barefoot and rather hungry, over Anatolia. They went to Trebizond, Batum. One day they were at the frontier. They crossed it. Somehow they made their way to Moscow. In Moscow they went to the university and studied sociology, political economy, philosophy—no literature. They made friends with prominent Bolshevik

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artists—Meyerhold the producer, Mayakovsky, the poet, who was later to commit suicide, Edward Bagisky, who translated some of Nazim's poems into Russian. At Meyerhold's jubilee Nazim read a poem. He also wrote a play, *The Pyramids,* which Meyerhold was to produce. This play was later burned by the Turkish police along with many of Nazim's poems.

In 1925—the days of the Kurdish revolt—he was back in Turkey, editing a communistic magazine. It had a short life. The Tribunals of Independence were then in full action, dealing ruthlessly with all political outspokenness. He was condemned to fifteen years in prison for communistic propaganda and fled to Russia. Two years later he wanted to return, but the Turkish Consulate refused to grant him a passport. He crossed the frontier with a band of smugglers—was caught. Three months in prison at Hopa, one month at Rize. He was then taken back to Istanbul and on one memorable day marched up Bab'ali in handcuffs with Vala Nurettin, behind them a murderer and a madman, all properly escorted by armed gendarmes. Perhaps the madman was the "symbolist" who appears in one of Nazim's poems:

The hours with their naked shoulders
are pulling behind them
the black-sailed ship of night.
In the dim-lit air of the cell the waters splash.
The prisoners lean against
the ship's
luminous oars. . . .
"I caught a cock in the forest
with a bloody comb on his head.
He said, do not cut my throat!
My knife spared the cock—
it must have been blind—
but I'll slay him yet,
I'll slay him, slay him,
slay—
come pay the money and play the trump
card. . . .
I caught a cock in the forest.
He opened his wing of fire,
out of my hand flew my cock."

The madman opposite—"Under observation"—
calls his fire-winged cock,
shouting like a symbolist poet
in the night.

"I caught a cock in the forest,
he said, do not cut my throat!"

The voice ceased.

The voice rose in a scream—
"Do not strike me!
The fire-comb is broken!"

Now the madman is flung face foremost on the
ground,
and a man in white drawers,
is chewing his whiskers
as he hits at the mass of flesh
with his heavy police belt.

Hassan called from my side,
gripping the iron bars:
"Do not beat the madman, you!
I'll pay double my road-tax,
I'll lie in this stinking hole
another ninety days!"

And Yusuf, on my other side,
grew pale,
his eyes, like the muzzle of a gun,
heavy with lead.

Twenty days in the infirmary of the Stamboul prison. Then three months in Angora where he was to be tried again. Eight months in all, during which Nazim continued to write poems, undaunted and if anything more pugnacious than ever. At the end of that time the Gazi interfered on his behalf and he was set free and his sentence recalled.

He arrived penniless in Istanbul and was faced with the problem of earning a living on Bab'ali, where poets are many but piastres are few. For his first book of verse, published in the new characters, he received forty-five lire—a little over twenty dollars. He took to odd jobs such as writing cinema reviews

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for the papers, which paid rather better, while they lasted, than original verse. Then he became a proof-corrector at the office of a monthly magazine. It was hardly a solution, and though he is in no way desirous of becoming a capitalist he cannot help chafing under the irksomeness of his proletarian profession:

> And I the Poet—Proof-Corrector,
> I who must for 2 lire a day
> read 2000 rotten lines. . . .

A sketch of Nazim Hikmet which the author of the accompanying article considers a more characteristic likeness than the photographs.

he exclaims in disgust in a poem which goes on to tell of his escape from the printing-press with printer's ink on his face and seventy-five piastres in his pocket. He has published within the last few years five little books of verse: *835 Lines, The Gioconda and Si-Ya-U* (a long poem), *Item 3, 1+1=1,* (a pamphlet of 32 pages, half of them contributed by another poet) and *The City That Lost Its Voice.* In all, some 262 pages. Several of the poems in these collections, however, were written prior to 1929. He insists on publishing them a few at a time and on cheap paper because he intends them chiefly for two poor classes: the workers and the students.

His long poem, *The Gioconda and Si-Ya-U,* is a symbolical contrast of East and West in which he expresses his "hatred of British and French imperialism" and his "sympathy with the noble struggle for freedom which is taking place in China". Of his shorter poems, some are beautiful lyrics, among the most beautiful to be found in the Turkish language, and some are undisguised propaganda of ideas. There are also a few less important satires, probably written in angry moments during his eight months in prison. His verse is always bold, striking, the metaphors chosen from the world of machines, factories, railways and bridges. He believes the most beautiful language to be the industrial language—more exact and more to the point than the language of literature. He likes bright naked colours, red in all its shades predominating, copper and brass, and sunlight. He likes swift images—"The news travelled in the air like fiery greyhounds". When he is angry, and even when he isn't, he abounds in oaths. There is a small and very convenient expletive in Turkish which he says has for him exactly the value of a comma. There are times, however, when he uses words soberly, as in this modern version of the *Ballade des Pendus,* in which he grimly summarizes the activities of the Tribunals of Independence:

> A round
> table.
> Four bottles.
> Four men
> and four glasses of wine—
> Médoc.

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In the glasses
there is wine,
there is no wine,
there is wine.
Four men are drinking.

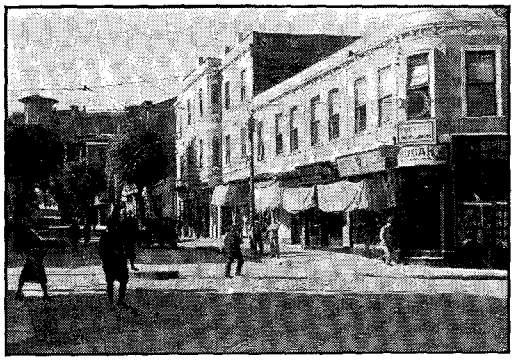
One bottle is empty.
One man speaks:
—Tomorrow
I settle the matter
with a bang.
No words wasted—
the man
must hang.

Three bottles are empty.
Three men answer,
Three mouths answer:
—Certainly
the man
will hang.

A round
table,
four empty glasses
and four men. . . .

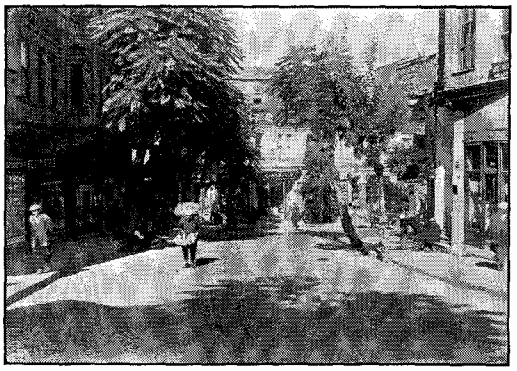
"We have had our fill", he says in one poem, "of the rose and the nightingale, the soul and the moon." Elsewhere he writes: "The fairy who inspires my verse has wings on her shoulder made of the steel of suspension bridges". His belief in machinery, his worship of it, are characteristic of the Russia where he studied and of the Turkey to which he belongs. In both these countries machines have suddenly appeared, bringing with them a new feeling of mastery and what amounts almost to a new creed. A great deal of Nazim's poetry is the expression of this intoxication with the mechanical. But there is also in him a certain lyricism which in a Russian poet would be anathema, but which indicates one aspect of the Turkey of today. Such lyricism, for instance, as in the following poem, very beautiful in the original:

The river flowed,
showed
the willow trees in its mirror.



"The corner shop at the lower end of Bab'ali, the Avenue of the Sublime Porte. . . . Here the poets, novelists and journalists of the day walk and work and eat and discuss the universe."

The weeping-willows are washing their hair
in the water.
The crimson horsemen ran toward the place
where the sun sets,
their burning naked swords hitting the willows.
Suddenly
like a bird
wounded in the wing
a wounded horseman rolled down from his
horse.
He did not cry,
did not call back those who were going,
only he looked with brimming eyes
at the shining hoofs of the disappearing horses.



"Then the bookshops begin. . . . Against this setting may be seen almost any day a tall young man with impressive shoulders and equally impressive strides, wearing the cloth cap which in his mind is a symbol of the proletariat."

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Ah, what a pity,
what a pity that he will never again
lie on the foaming necks of swift-going horses,
flash his sword in the rear of snow white armies!

The hoof sounds grow fainter, fainter,
the horsemen are lost in the place where the sun is setting.
The horsemen, the horsemen, the crimson horsemen,
the wind-winged horsemen!
The wind-winged horsemen . . .
The wind-winged horse . . .
The wind . . .

Like the wind-winged horsemen life has passed and is gone!
The voice of the running water has ceased,
the shadows have deepened,
colours are erased.
Black curtains have been lowered
over his blue eyes.
The weeping-willows droop
over his fair hair.

Do not weep, weeping-willows,
do not weep.
Do not wring your hands in the black river's mirror,
do not wring your hands,
do not weep!

Such poetry is untranslatable, as is all poetry worthy of the name. Think of Keats in French:

La beauté est la vérité, la vérité la beauté; c'est tout ce que tu sais
Et tout ce que tu as besoin de savoir sur cette terre.

No better does one recognize in the translation of Hikmet's poem the strange receding horsemen whose horsehoofs one can *hear* in the original.

Nazim Hikmet stands, as does perhaps no other poet in the world, poised between East and West, accepting as his heritage what each has given the world that is good and making no compromise with what is evil or outgrown. He tears through the conventional glamour with which Western writers have invested the East. He pokes bitter fun at Pierre Loti and at the whole "disenchanted" school of seekers after sensation:

A snapshot taken in the infirmary of the prison at Angora, where Nazim Hikmet spent three months in 1928.

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Mystery!
Fatalism!
Kismet!
Lattice, fountain, han,
caravan!
Sultana dancing on a silver tray!
Maharajah, padishah,
Shah,
a thousand and one years old!
Mother o' pearl clogs dangle from minarets,
women with rose-painted noses
embroider tapestry with their delicate feet.
Green-bearded hodjas
chant the evening prayer
to the winds!

But he turns impetuously to his brothers in the West, those who are working like him to bring about a new order:

I give you my hand,
we have given you our hand,
embrace us,
O sansculottes of Europe!
Let us ride our crimson horses side by side!

One remembers Whitman's "Camerado, I give you my hand!" And indeed there is in both men the same disregard of all boundaries that stand in the way of brotherhood. But the Turkish poet is also a fighter, one who preaches that we must work and suffer and "burn" that the blue days may come:

If I don't burn,
if you don't burn,
if we don't burn,
how else then
will the darkness rise
unto
the light?

The blue days are of course the days of the new social era, and Nazim Hikmet has raised many hymns to them. The time of Gul and Bulbul is passed, and a new time will come when the flowered gardens where we may now walk "only on Fridays, only on Sundays", will be open all day long to new people singing new songs.

Perhaps I
long before
that day,
swinging at one end of the Bridge,
will let my shadow fall on the asphalt.

Perhaps I
long after
that day,
with a trace of white beard on my shaved chin,
will still be living . . .

And I
long after
that day
if I am still alive
leaning against the walls
in the public squares
to the old men who like me have survived
the last quarrel
will play on holiday evenings
the violin . . .

All around, the luminous pavements
of a wonderful night
and the footsteps of new people
singing new songs. . . .

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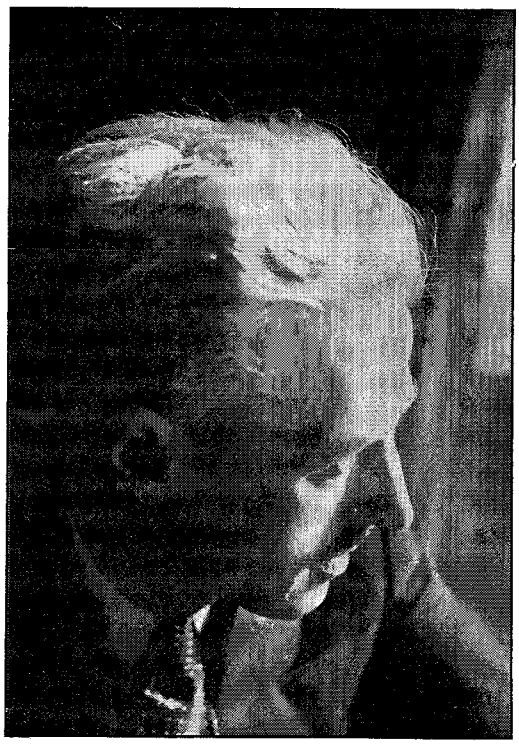
EX-DETECTIVE HAMMETT

by Elizabeth Sanderson

A CRITIC once said of Dashiell Hammett's work: "The writing is better than Hemingway, since it conceals not softness but hardness". If hardness consists of writing about criminals as though they were human, of looking on detectives with an unbiased eye and setting them down as less than paragons of shrewdness and integrity, of admitting corruption, human frailty and occasional pleasant qualities in both his man-hunters and their quarry, Dashiell Hammett's hardness is the main reason for his success. He writes of people he knows,



people with whom he has worked professionally, and his characters, instead of being the stock marionettes of the usual detective story, are the flesh-and-blood figures of any good novel. As a consequence the usual detective story formulas are not enough to carry them, and Mr. Hammett disregards the old rules. The result is that he has written, in *Red Harvest, The Dain Curse, The Maltese Falcon* and *The Glass Key*, four of the best detective stories ever published. He is, in addition, a master of terse, abrupt prose, and he can tell more in one sentence of it than many an earlier mystery novel writer managed to convey in a chapter.

It was with a great deal of interest, then, that I set out to interview this man who had contributed a new form of fiction to contemporary literature.

Dashiell Hammett is tall, slim, sophisticated, with prematurely white hair above a young face. He was born in Maryland in 1894, and he holds that the only remarkable thing about his family is that there were, on his mother's side, sixteen army men of France who never saw a battle. The family name was De Chiel, and "Dashiell" is its Americanized version. (He will impress upon you that the accent falls on the second syllable.) He grew tired of school at the age of thirteen, and started on years of diverse jobs by working as a newsboy. Before the war broke out he had been a freight-clerk, a general worker around railroads, and a copy-writer for a small San Francisco jewel-

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ler. The World War broke the De Chiel curse: Dashiell Hammett saw fighting, and when he left the army he left it with tuberculosis. During his recuperation he met and married a hospital nurse, who is now the mother of his two daughters, aged ten and five. The next job he found he held eight years: it was as a detective for the Pinkerton Detective Agency.

To Mr. Hammett being a detective was just another job; it was no fulfilment of a long-stifled boyish ambition born of reading Nick Carter. He admits that the first four years were full of interest and stimulation: he helped to send Nicky Arnstein to jail; he spent three months on a hospital cot trying to coax evidence from a suspect in the next bed; disguised as an ardent I.W.W. he was sent to Minnesota to follow another suspicious character; he worked on the Arbuckle case, which, he says, was a frame-up by some newspaper boys, who saw a big scoop in Arbuckle's guilt. (And politics in California, he asserts, are the most corrupt in the world.)

His Pinkerton career was interrupted for a time by another prolonged rest, and in his leisure he began to write. But he went back to Pinkerton's, and when I asked why he had finally left that profession he answered: "I suppose because they wouldn't let me go to Australia after some stolen gold. It sounded romantic. Later they found some of the gold in a San Francisco fire-hose". So Dashiell Hammett settled down to write for a living, and has written in some form or other—as often for the movies as for the bookstores—ever since.

Mr. Hammett says that the detective in *Red Harvest* and *The Dain Curse* was drawn from a real man. Spade, in *The Maltese Falcon*, is half real and half imaginary, and all the rest of Hammett's characters were made by combining the traits and experiences of

people he really knew as a detective. A detective is not actually a romantic figure, and few thieves or murderers are ever pure "criminal types". So Dashiell Hammett left the Philo Vances to Mr. Van Dine and wrote of what he had seen as a hard-working man among men of very little culture or nobility.

With all his experience to draw on, and in spite of the remarkable success that has come to him from his detective stories, Mr. Hammett does not want to go on writing them. He wants to write a play. Later he will write straight novels, but not until he has written his play.

He ought to be successful as a playwright. His dialogue is dramatic, accurate and economical. He can inject qualities into commonplace scenes that turn them into extraordinary situations. His characters are living persons, compounded of good and evil qualities. He can portray ruthlessness and greed

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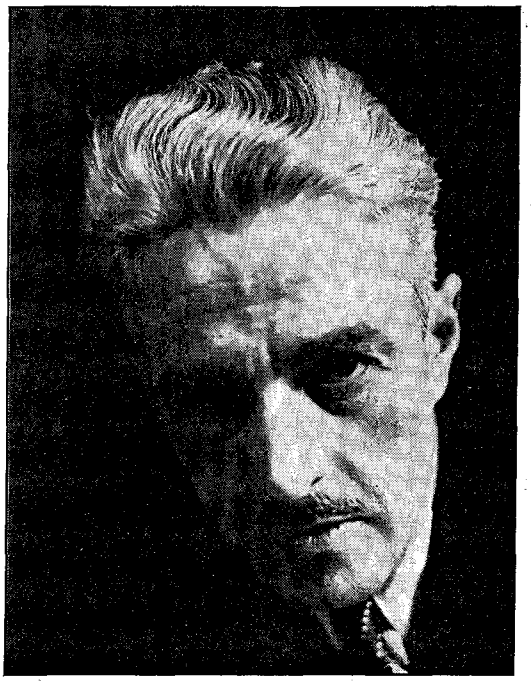
as well as William Faulkner. His characters are not pathological, as Faulkner's are, but Mr. Hammett draws them just as pitilessly and far more directly. He knows the effective use of suspense. The prospects for a good play look auspicious.



In the course of the interview I gathered that Mr. Hammett has written some verse. That he thinks Robinson Jeffers the best story-teller he has ever read, and the cruellest. That he likes Hemingway, Faulkner and Hecht. He thinks Wilbur Daniel Steele is a competent magazine writer. He considers *The Dain Curse* a silly story, *The Maltese Falcon* "too manufactured", and *The Glass Key* not so bad—that the clews were nicely placed there, although nobody seemed to see them. (I told him that everyone hadn't been a detective.) He had Mickey Mouse's orchestra on top of his bookcase, and on his desk were a lot of his own publicity photographs, of which he gave me the most flattering. When he works his enthusiasm carries him through thirty-six-hour periods of steady writing, which explains the evenness of his atmosphere.

At present Mr. Hammett is working on a story for Marlene Dietrich, and after it is finished he plans to go abroad. He wants to stay in Europe a year or two while he finishes his play and tries his hand at a straight novel. I suspect that despite what he says the Pinkerton days have left an ineradicable imprint; that notwithstanding the plans for the play, the novels and the scenarios, he will weaken from time to time and write other detective stories. I devoutly hope so. He is sufficiently versatile and talented to write excellently in all these forms.

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RED-HEADED EMPRESS

KATHARINE FULLER BRUSH TRIES HER LINE ON EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

by H. W. Hanemann

MRS. LOUIS N. BONAPARTE was red-haired and rather more beautiful than Mlle d'Armentières. Her husband said, good Lord, she was ten times as beautiful! He said, "Why, baby, next to you, Cleopatra was a cluck!" He usually said this around twelve-thirty A. M. when the palace was dark and Their Majesties had retired. At that time Louis Napoleon would agree to anything.

Mrs. Red-Headed Bonaparte was twenty-seven years old. Her name was Eugénie—with an accent aigu. She lived in the Tuileries—a tough word to pronounce, but it was worth it. Everything was worth it. She was Mrs. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte—Empress Eugénie to you, and mind that accent. With a little crown on top, it was embroidered all over her lingerie where it would do the most good.

CHAPTER TWO

She was fifteen when she first saw Louis Napoleon. She thought he was cute. She was on a little balcony in Paris with Momma and Prosper Mérimée. Mérimée wrote a song about it called *On a Little Balcony in Paris* then he changed it to *On a Little Balcony in Spain* then he changed it to *Carmen*. Writers are like that.

When Eugénie was twenty-four, she got herself invited to one of the state parties at the Elysée Palace. It was loads and away smarter than the Bijou Dream where Eugénie usually went. They had all white meat in the chicken salad and the waiters wore gloves. She sat on a sofa with Louis Napoleon. He was President of the National Assembly. He put his arm around her.

"Judas, Rouge, you're beautiful," he said, boyishly. "Give us a big, friendly kiss."

"Please, Mr. Bonaparte," she answered. "Lay off."

"Aw, come on," he said. "Neck or nothing." He meant neck *and* nothing. The old army game.

"No, Mr. Bonaparte," she said. "Please stop pawing me." Oh, boy! Would that have convulsed Popo Lafitte who had the fencing academy on the Rue St.-Jacques, or his pal Gus Duval who travelled in morticians' supplies!

"It's an old motto of the rulers of France," said Louis Napoleon. " 'He never reigns but he paws.' "

"You're not ruler of France yet," she said. She stood up with a fine young litheness of hips. "Come on, Mr. Bonaparte, let's be getting back to the others." He followed her, grumbling but docile.

She had him going, but he was like a four dollar wrist watch. The trick was to keep him going.

CHAPTER THREE

Eugénie's unassailable beauty kept him going. He could make history, she told him, but for her there was a matter of a ring. And

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a finger. It kept him That Way right up to the night of the New Year's Eve party on December 31, 1853. It was at the Tuileries. In the scramble toward the main dining room, Eugénie had a row with Mme Fourtoul.

"Listen, you fancy bit of pastry," said the wife of the Minister of Public Education. "Act like a lady! Get back where you belong and don't shove! Go on now, scram—before I hang this chocolate éclair on your eye!" She added a slap slightly below Eugénie's décolletage.

With burning cheeks, Eugénie ran straight to Loony. (She called him Loony, now; a name she had made up out of Louis and Napoleon.)

"I've been publicly insulted," she said. "And by that lousy Mme Fourtoul of all people!"

Putting on his inscrutable look, Loony listened to her plaint. God! She was beautiful! He had sort of wanted to marry into one of the royal families of Europe—for state reasons. But speaking for himself—he patted her hand.

"It's all right, Rouge," he said. "Nobody's going to make a pass at my Baby while I'm around."

The next day he gave out the official announcement of their engagement.

CHAPTER FOUR

Loony's swell cousins, the Princess Mathilde and Prince Napoleon, were maid of honour and best man at the wedding. Eugénie wore Alençon lace and a diamond and sapphire belt that Lou's Uncle Napoleon I had given to Aunt Marie-Louise. On the whole it was a quiet affair with cannon booming and fireworks exploding all night long and a special cantata by Aubert and Méry broadcast from the Place Vendôme by special permission of the copyright owners. They went to St. Cloud for the honeymoon. Eugénie wanted to go to New York, but the Emperor said he had to see a man about an eagle.

After they got back to the Tuileries, Eugénie had in the old Duchesse de Kabarette to help her with the court ceremonies. Kabarette was *ancien régime* and absolutely kosher, which made Eugénie just the least bit afraid of her. Together they planned court etiquette and rules for procedure but the old lady was as scornful as she was helpful. "There's a lot could be done, dear knows," she said with a polite sneer, "but coming from the likes of you two they'd never stand for it."

This so annoyed Eugénie she would have been glad to have had Kabarette thrown into the Bastille only it had been torn down during the First Revolution.

"'Listen, you fancy bit of pastry! Act like a lady! Get back where you belong and don't shove! Go on now, scram!'"

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They differed over the number of bows. Eugénie was all for taking as many bows as they could get and bringing out the French flag when the applause died down, but Kabarette only sniffed.

"Mme de Montespan always left 'em wanting more," she said. "That was the secret of her success."

Anxious to impress the folks that counted, Eugénie threw party after party, sometimes with magnificent costumes for the ladies and funny hats for the gents or nobles. Only she never seemed to come out right on these affairs. The aristocracy that attended were no help at all. Graciously as Eugénie received them, with a "How they rolling, Duc?" or "Some train, Marquise, I'll say!" all they did was to act stiff as pokers and make sly polished digs which they afterwards published. One night she asked the Duc de Périgord what he thought of the *canaille.*

"Madame," he replied gravely, "I haven't been fishing in it since I was a boy." Nor was it any better when she told the Vicomtesse d'Arlènes to douse her tomato surprise with plenty of marseillaise.

The other element, which Eugénie invited to liven up the court, thought it was funny to get Lou to drinking. Pauline Lachmann, Marguerite Bellanger, Cora Pearl and even Theresa, who had been hired to sit on top of the Duo-Art and sing. Sometimes he drank too much champagne, even for an emperor. Then Eugénie would have to drag him out from under a sofa and hiss in his ear, "For God's sake will you come out of there and dance with the Duchesse de Hainault! It took a corporal's guard to get her here". Sometimes she found Loony in the shrubbery and then there were bitter rows.

"Not only does it look crummy," she would conclude, "but I have to get those palms back to the caterer's reasonably intact."

Altogether, as Alexandre Dumas *père* said, "It was one hell of an Imperial Court of France".

CHAPTER FIVE

While Eugénie fought hard to establish herself as the First Red-headed Lady of the Second Empire, Lou worked at the affairs of state. He was accounted a good business man. Possessed of a driving, dynamic energy that amounted almost to violence, he arrived at the Chambre de Députés of a morning head-first out of the window without stopping to open the door of his cabriolet. Bursting into the hall, he hurdled the marble statues, knocking down three or four in his progress to the long window-pole in the corner. With this he pole-vaulted over his desk into his chair, sometimes missing the chair entirely and landing in the inkwell. Then he rushed all day, occasionally leaping to his feet for no reason at all and running around the room like mad—as if the world wasn't revolving fast enough for him.

Eugénie took it all as a matter of course. She hadn't much interest in business, unless it was to drop down to the office to borrow a couple of thousand francs for a henna rinse and show the stenographers what a real lady looked like. One night Lou came barging up the palace steps six at a time and told her France was going to aid England against Russia. He said they would have to go to London for a conference.

"London?" was her sole comment. "Oh, boy! Will I make Nelson take off his hat!"

CHAPTER SIX

The Crimean War dragged on and you could get good tickets for it at Le Blang's at any time, so Eugénie lost interest. London had been a strain. Old friends of Lou's had kept popping up at inopportune moments and

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"'I am Mrs. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte—Empress Eugénie to you, and mind that accent.'"

asking him if he remembered that night on Waterloo Bridge. The Exposition was a lot more like it.

The Universal Exposition of Paris opened in 1855. It was an idea of Lou's to get a lot of visitors into the city in a spending, holiday mood. Their Majesties made a nice piece of change from awarding medals and judging exhibits. Then there was the Eugénie hat which they put on the market. Eugénie had thrown together the original at Compiègnes out of an old sofa cushion with a few pins and a feather duster. With *"Exposition universelle de Paris"* or *"Excusez ma poussière"* worked on them in gold thread, they sold by the thousand. In a few months the entire world was wearing them. The leading newspapers wrote editorials, the more radical ones declaring the hats a menace to civilization. Finally somebody threw a bomb. The bomb killed twelve people, wounded one hundred and fifty-six and completely ruined a water wave that Eugénie had stayed in all afternoon to set. It was rank ingratitude.

Could she write a book!

CHAPTER SEVEN

Matters grew steadily worse after the bomb incident. Lou developed rheumatism (from crawling in the shrubbery). He wouldn't admit it, but he also had a touch of gall stones. Eugénie said to call them Gaul stones and to offer them as proof of his patriotism. Lou said no, it was bad for business. Business was bad, he said. He said the people were getting out of hand. He said they were complaining about the extravagance of the imperial program and he said they said hard times were just around the corner. He said they were generally inflamed. It was the Eugénie hat, he said. He said it had that effect on them.

"Sez you," said Eugénie.

She was having her own trouble with Junior. Much to her surprise, a red-headed stork had dropped in on March 16, 1856, with her Little One. She had named him Napoleon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph Bonaparte, which, she thought, was as whimsical as anything A. A. Milne ever pulled. But the brat was getting too whimsical himself. He had no respect for his mother. He walked out on an act she had taken a lot of trouble preparing for them.

"Listen, son," she said. "Tonight at the grand ball, I'll ask you who is the most beautiful woman in the world. And then you drop down on one knee open your little arms wide and say 'Mammy'!"

"Not me," Prince Eugène replied, pertly. "I wouldn't work for the Shuberts."

"I told him", Eugénie said to Louis

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Napoleon afterwards, "I had a good mind to have his epaulettes removed."

"Aw, Rouge," said the Emperor, who spoiled the child inordinately, "what's the sense in frightening the kid like that?"

CHAPTER EIGHT

Matters grew worse than they were in the preceding chapter. The people howled republicanism. They had had enough of the Eugénie hat. They wanted the red bonnet. The aristocracy sneered. One of the little boys at Prince Eugène's military school insisted on his own way of spelling "prince". Morny was dead. Walewski was dead. Berryer was dead. Marshal Niel was dead. Marshall Field was giving away the 77-B's (brown velour with magenta plume) with each pound of coffee. Down at the office, Lou found the general manager fiddling with the papers on his desk. They sat talking about it over a bowl of chop suey.

"What we need", said Eugénie, "is a foreign threat. What we need is a war. What we need is to get the people's mind off us and onto their national honour." She licked her fingers delicately.

Lou groaned and shifted to a more comfortable position. "I don't really feel capable of a good, personally conducted war, Rouge," he said. "This rheumatism—"

"Shut up!" said Eugénie. "I've got it all figured out. We're going to fight Germany. On to Berlin! Vivvy la France!"

"The people—" said Louis Napoleon.

"Let them eat arsenic", said Eugénie, who fancied she was becoming more like Marie Antoinette every day.

With a little unexpected help from Bismarck, Eugénie finally had her way. She packed Louis and Eugène off to the trenches and Lou created her Regent. She went down to the office every morning with the Regency diamond pinned to her tailleur and conferred and signed papers. She signed with a flourish, lifting her pinky high in the air, meticulously forming the accent from left to—no, no, right to left. She wrote advice to Louis, telling him to give the army a good talking to between halves and not to let Junior carry the ball. He was too young, and those cannon balls were too heavy.

"She studied her reflection. She was pale, and there was the teeniest pin point of a spot on the left side of her chin, but God, she was beautiful!"

In spite of all her efforts, the French army, woefully unequipped and in far from midseason form, took a terrible pasting at Wissembourg, Wörth, Forbach and Spicheren. The Krauts were good. Then came Sedan, fought in a steady drizzle on a muddy field. Lou threw in every substitute on the team and sent the regulars back into the battle wrapped in so many bandages that it looked

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as if the Germans were fighting the ancient Egyptians instead of the French. It was a shambles. They took Junior out of the country on the lam and Lou gave himself up as prisoner to stop the slaughter. The people went crazy.

With her attendants Eugénie sat in a room at the Tuileries and nervously listened to the angry cries of the mob outside the gates. "What are they yelling about now?" she demanded imperiously.

"Madame," said the old Sire de Roebuc, gravely, "they are demanding your abdication. Or else—" He took out his sword and began stropping it on the leather seat of a chair.

"Or else?" At the hands of this mob—these ravening swine? She picked up a mirror from the table and studied her reflection. She was pale, and there was the teeniest pin point of a spot on the left side of her chin, but God, she was beautiful! What this bunch of aristocrats needed was a little common sense.

"All right," she said. "No use getting the lot of us killed." With a shower of flying glass, a dead cat came sailing through the handsomely curtained window. Eugénie ducked and lifted her billowing skirts about her exquisite knees.

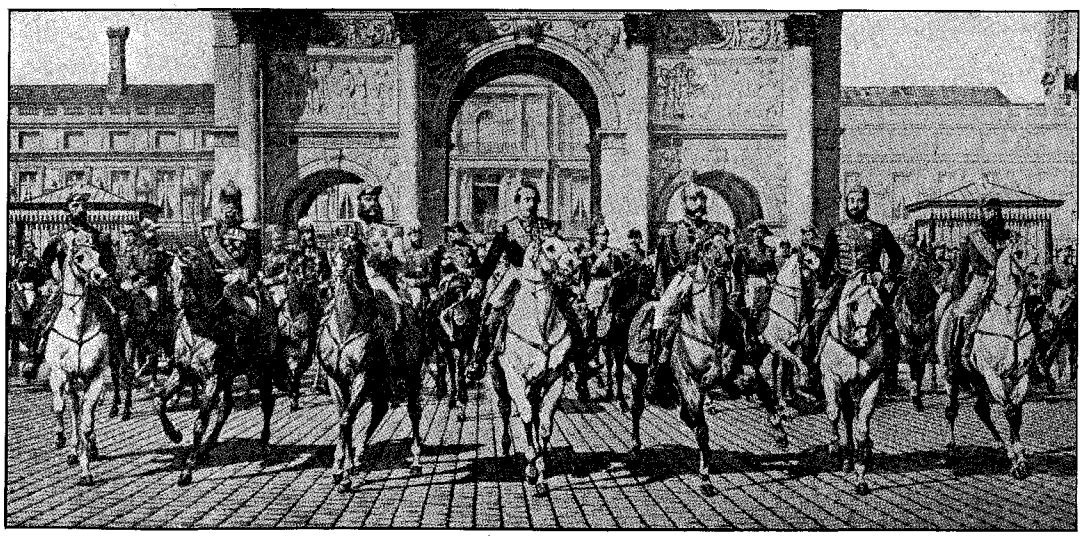
"I'm abdicating," she said. "Right now. You high-born babies can make your own arrangements."

CHAPTER NINE

A room in the Tuileries connected with the Louvre. Eugénie, Sally Lebreton and Charley Nyra went through the Louvre and out the back door with speed that would have done credit to a party of tourists. They lost Charley in the mob outside, but before the mob could sense their identity they caught a fiacre. They drove immediately to the office of Dr. Evans, the fashionable American dentist. "Under the circumstances he's the safest," said Eugénie. "And we can count on his pull." A blonde secretary opened the door to them.

"Dr. Evans at once," said Eugénie. "It's vital!"

"I'll see if the doctor can devitalize it," said the girl. "But you should have had an ap-



"It was an idea of Lou's to get a lot of visitors into the city in a spending, holiday mood."

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perntment." The doctor came out of his office.

"Well, well, well," he said. "Empie! Having a little trouble?"

"Doctor!" cried Eugénie clasping his hand in both of hers. "The mob is after me. Will you help me escape?"

"Sure," said the doctor. "Sure I'll help you escape. And now that you're here, how about sitting down in the chair and letting me take a look at those back molars?"

CHAPTER TEN

The escape was a nightmare. The doctor took them to Deauville in his coach. The doctor told the guards at the gates that they were patients of his. The doctor told Eugénie to let down her front red hair and pretend she was crazy. Every time they were stopped, she had to stick her head out of the window and yell "warf-warf!" or blow spit bubbles. "And me an Empress only yesterday afternoon," she moaned over and over again to Sally.

At Deauville, they were barely ahead of the bulls. Dr. Evans appealed to the British sporting blood of a Sir John Burgoyne to take Eugénie to England on his yacht. They crossed in a hurricane and for the first time Eugénie wasn't so sure she was so beautiful. She tried it out on the captain.

"Beautiful?" said the bluff, hearty old sea dog. "Beautiful, Ma'am? Begod you look like the south end of a stranded whale on an ebb tide!"

It was the final outrage.

* * *

Eugénie was living in Camden House, Chislehurst, England, now. Junior was at military school but Lou was with her. After the treaty of Frankfurt, the Germans had let Lou out of hoch. He hadn't the old snap. All he did was sit around and rub Sloan's liniment on his rheumatism. He sat on a padded chair with cushions behind his back.

"Ah, well!" he said. "No use complaining. We had a good time while it lasted."

Eugénie grunted and nibbled at the end of her penholder. While waiting for the Warner Brothers to talk turkey, she had gone literary. She was writing a testimonial for a face cream. Lou uncorked a fresh bottle of liniment.

"We made history," he continued. "They'll remember the Second Empire. It was all reviews and hunts and masquerades. Picnics, parties . . ."

The red-headed Mrs. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte vouchsafed no reply. Versailles . . . the Grand Staircase flashing with multi-coloured lights reflected in the priceless jewels of the women . . . the tap of the leader's baton, warning the orchestra . . .

"It certainly was," she said. "How do you spell 'refreshing'?"

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1812– –1870

CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS OLDEST FRIEND

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS TO THOMAS BEARD

Edited by Bernard Darwin

Part IV—Conclusion

THIS fourth instalment of the letters of Charles Dickens covers the last ten years of his life, from 1860 to 1870. Hitherto all the letters have been addressed to his oldest friend, Thomas Beard, whom he had first known in the Gallery of the House of Commons. In this series are several letters to Mr. Frank Carr Beard, F.R.C.S., Thomas's brother. Mr. Frank Beard was, through his brother, an old friend of Dickens. Forster mentions him and his wife among those to be met at Devonshire Terrace in 1848. It was not however till 1859 that he became the regular doctor of the Dickens family. The letters to him are nearly all on the matter of health and make rather sad reading, because they show Dickens, though always full of splendid courage and vitality, beginning to grow conscious that his health is not what it was and that years of overwork are at last telling on his constitution. It seems best to keep the letters to the two Beard brothers separate, even though this involves a departure from chronological order.

The first letter to Thomas Beard is dated June 12, 1860, from Gad's Hill which had now become Dickens's only home, Tavistock House having been given up. It and its successor refer to the wedding of Dickens's second daughter, Kate Macready, who was to be married to Charles Alston Collins, a brother of Wilkie Collins.

My dear Beard,

The girls feel that Kate's marriage cannot possibly come off without the presence of the ancient friend of the venerable parent. This is,

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therefore, to require you to be at this house on the morning of Tuesday the seventeenth day of July in this present year of Our Lord, to grace the Nuptials then to be solemnized in the parochial church of Higham (N. B. its connection, I hope, with a similar ceremony performed in a metropolitan edifice some four-and-twenty years ago).

You shall know all about the hour of coming down, as the day approaches. It will be a very quiet affair indeed. If it will be convenient to you to begin your annual stay in these parts, that day, it will be perfectly so for us. But we mean to cure you, this year, of your habit of walking off too soon.

Lord, how the time and Life steal on! It was but yesterday that Katie always had a scratched knee—and it was but the day before yesterday when there was no such creature.

Ever, my dear Beard,
Heartily Yours,
C. D.

The next letter gives details of the arrangements. It is scarcely necessary to explain the allusion to the immortal Tom Sayers who had fought his most famous fight against Heenan, the Benicia Boy, some three months before, on April seventeenth.

In the booking office of the North Kent Terminus at London Bridge, *on Tuesday morning at from five-and-twenty minutes to twenty minutes before Ten*, you will find Wills who will take you in charge and bring you up to the Matrimonial scratch in time to see the Sayers of the occasion throw up his castor.

Ever affectionately,
C. D.

There was a great meeting of friends at the wedding, and Dickens was delighted by the warm-heartedness of his country neighbours. "All the villagers", says Forster, "had turned out in honour of Dickens, and the carriages could scarcely get to and from the little church for the succession of triumphal arches they had to pass through. It was quite unexpected by him; and when the *feu de joie* of the blacksmith in the lane, whose enthusiasm had smuggled a couple of small cannon into his forge, exploded upon him at the return, I doubt if the shyest of men was ever so taken aback at an ovation."

Charles Collins, the bridegroom, had been bred a painter and had designed the cover of *Edwin Drood* by which so many have attempted to solve the mystery of Dickens's unfinished novel. Gradually Collins turned from painting to literature and contributed stories and papers to *All the Year Round*. He died in 1873. His widow married again and is best remembered by her later name of Mrs. Perugini.

After an interval of nearly a year come two letters as to a piece of work which Dickens got Beard to do for *All the Year Round*. The first is dated March 3, 1861. The first part of the second series of readings was then going on.

Since you mentioned to me in the last note I had from you that you were doing some little things for the *Observer*, I have been again and again turning over in my mind the old question whether there are not some kinds of articles that you surely could do for *All the Year Round*.

To make what I mean as practical and intelligible as possible in the shortest way, I send you a pamphlet I have lately received, which in the main expresses the views I have often urged respecting Prison Discipline—which sensibly shows what evil is done by injudicious Jail Chaplains—and points out in what glaring respects their set ways of carrying on, are wrong. Now don't you think that you could write, just such an abstract of this pamphlet, and accounts of this question according to its writer's views and experience, as I want? And don't you think you could do it quite as well as another man? *I do.*

If you can find it in your heart to make the attempt, only fancy throughout that you are doing your utmost to tell some man something in the pleasantest and most intelligent way that is natural to you—and that he is on the whole a pleasant and intelligent fellow too, though rather afraid of being bored—and I really cannot doubt your coming out well. It is painful to me

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to consider that these subjects are constantly arising: that they must be done by someone; and that they are always going into other hands while yours are empty.

And talking of emptiness—why don't you come into my room at St. James's Hall where there is always a lump of Ice and a little old Brandy? Why do I see you sitting on the ends of rows whence you could glide out like the old Serpent, and sticking there like a fixture? ? ?

The second letter follows on April eighteenth.

I can *honestly* tell you—which I do with the heartiest pleasure—that I think you have very skilfully presented the case of the pamphlet. The condensation, and slight touch here and there, which I think will improve it, I will mark in the proof. And if you can come to the office next Wednesday at 12, I will have the proof there with my markings upon as a small guide for the future. The changes that occur to me are certainly no greater than I make in five out of every six papers that go in.

Ever Yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

I write hastily, before taking a pull at "Little Dombey" for tonight.

This letter is characteristic of Dickens as an editor. He gave, whenever he could, the warmest possible praise to his contributors, and his sincerity in doing so was as obvious as his pleasure. At the same time he never hesitated to suggest or even to make alterations in their work and sometimes he inserted passages of his own. As an example here is a note of his about George Augustus Sala when a young contributor to *Household Words*: "I think he improves with everything he does. He looks sharply at the alterations in his article, I observe; and takes the hint next time".

The subject of Beard's contribution, that of prisons, was one in which Dickens always took the keenest and most sympathetic interest, springing perhaps from his early experience when his father was in the Marshalsea. The Fleet in *Pickwick*, the King's Bench in *David Copperfield*, the Marshalsea in *Little Dorrit*, Newgate in *Great Expectations* —here are four instances that occur on the spur of the moment from his books, and of each of the four it may almost be said that he never did anything better. He constantly visited prisons. On his first visit to America, by way of example, we read of his going to see one at Philadelphia, and on his second visit he went to the penitentiary at Baltimore and saw the white and black prisoners being kept entirely apart.

A dramatic thing happened to him once when in the course of a tour of the London prisons he went to Newgate with Forster, Hablôt Browne and Macready. There was a sudden, startled cry from Macready: "My God! There's Wainewright". Shuffling away from them, among the prisoners under remand, was Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, poisoner, forger, painter and art critic, with whom Macready had often dined. This incident and the story of Wainewright's crimes made a strong impression on Dickens and suggested to him his story *Hunted Down*.

Next comes a Christmas letter written on December 26, 1861, from Gad's Hill with a passing allusion to the readings.

This is merely to return your Christmas greetings with hearty cordiality—and to say that I heard of only one man in Edinburgh (when I was there a fortnight ago) who had any of that whisky. He was understood to go in fear of his life: so horribly was he envied, and so dogged in all his comings and goings.

I am away again on Monday, but begin to see land now. As to the new Readings, I rather think myself that *Copperfield* is A1. But of this, please God, you shall judge at St. James's Hall in March. Their success has been prodigious.

Sydney got appointed to the *Orlando* (a ship that every one in the service seemed to be try-

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ing for), and has sailed for Halifax. He looked very very small when he went away with a chest in which he could easily have stored himself and a wife and family of his own proportions.

Of the *Copperfield* reading he had written to Forster: "With great pains I have made a continuous narrative out of *Copperfield*, that I think will reward the exertion. It will be very valuable in London".

mathematical instrument makers, to buy that part of his outfit. His sextant (which is about the size and shape of a cocked hat) on being applied to his eye, entirely concealed him. Not the faintest vestige of the distinguished officer behind it was perceptible to human vision. All through the City, people turned round and stared at him with the sort of pleasure people take in a little model."

In the February of the next year, 1862,

"JOHN BULL'S FAREWELL TO DICKENS."
A contemporary English cartoon to commemorate Dickens's departure on his second visit to America, 1867.

Sydney the midshipman was Dickens's fifth son, Sydney Smith Haldimand, whose family nickname was the "Hoshen Peck". This corruption of "Ocean Spectre" had in the end a sad significance, for the boy died and was buried at sea two years after his father's death.

There are in Dickens's letters many affectionate allusions to Sydney, "a born little sailor who will make his way anywhere". There is one in particular in a letter to his eldest daughter so charming that I must quote it. "I took the Admiral to Dollands', the

comes the annual command to a birthday party. Of these delicious letters of invitation it may be said, in Joe Gargery's words, "Never too soon, Sir, and never too often, Pip", and I shall quote every word.

This letter—Hush!—is to be regarded as an awful mystery, a fearful proposal, a cloak-and-dagger conspiracy.

As we have no house in town until the twentieth, I have told Mamie and Katie that no festivity takes place on their venerable Parent's birthday, and have in a general way implied that the hoary undersigned will remain on that day (next Friday as ever is), in a state of placid

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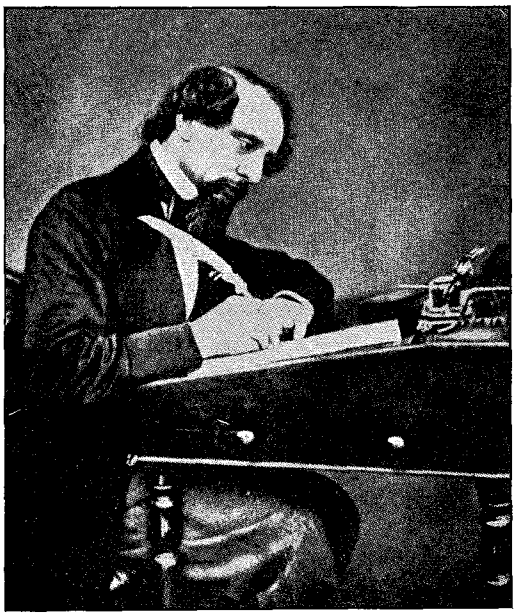

Dickens at fifty. From a photograph.

contemplation. But secretly it is proposed that you, Forster, Wilkie (and perhaps Georgy) dine with me at Verey's at 6, and endeavour to enjoy ourselves.

Say you will throw your cap into the ring at the appointed hour, in one line to Gad's Hill.

I have just finished my country Readings. The brilliancy of the close—at Manchester and Liverpool—has been absolutely dazzling. On Thursday March 13th I begin at St. James's Hall. Book yourself.

The next three letters, two of them from Paris and the third from Gad's Hill, relate to a project for a reading tour in Australia, never carried out, on which Dickens wanted Beard to come with him as his manager. Beard declined on grounds at which we can only guess from Dickens's reply.

I am going to ask you rather a startling, staggering question. Hold up, therefore!

If I were to decide to go and read in Australia, how stand your inclination and spirits for going with me? Outside term of absence, a year. Period of departure, May or June. Overland journey both ways. The journey and climate are said to be wonderful restorers. The work would be, seconding the Inimitable in the ring, delivering him at the scratch in fine condition, keeping off the crowd, polishing him up when at all punished, and checking the local accounts. The Arthur Smith class of arrangements would necessarily have to be made by the Colonial sharer, and my bottle holder would merely in all things represent me. A servant should go, to valet both of us, and make washing and dressing easy. I don't in the least know that I shall go. But supposing I *did* reopen the question with the Australian people, and supposing the negotiations *did* proceed to the going point, and supposing you *did* like the notion of what such a trip would ensure you free of all expense, do you feel equal to it? There are not six men in the world, I would go with—and I don't know the other five!

I cannot too strongly put to you when I come bursting at you with this surprising question, the extreme uncertainty in which the matter stands. But I am wavering between reading in Australia and writing a book at home; that, in strict confidence, is the whole truth. If I were to go to Australia, I would not let myself out, but would go with my own capital and on my own account. The man who came over to bid for me, has gone back. "Shall I write out to him and ask him on what terms he will become my agent?" is the question that revives in my mind. I may not write at all. I may write, and his reply may be such that it will all come to nothing three months hence. But constantly disturbed and dazzled by the great chances that seem to be waiting over there, I am restless—and this mark of my confidence in my old comrade is the very first form my restlessness has shaped out for itself.

I parted with the bidder thus: "I cannot go now, I don't know that I ever *can* go, and therefore terms are not in question. But if I can ever make up my mind to go, I will certainly communicate with your Melbourne House". (He opened the business with me by producing a letter of credit for £10,000.)

Write me a word when you get your breath again.

Startlingly always,

THE INIMITABLE.

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Eleven days later he writes again, still from Paris.

I feel that I have no right to argue the case with you, as you state it in the letter which breathes your own spirit and rectitude, and yet there are half a dozen words which I think I ought not to leave unsaid, because they seem essential to the plainness of the case and its completeness.

On my side of the question (I adopt your phrase because there is no better one), I think all requisites are embodied in a gentleman and an attached friend. I think no other combination of qualities would be half so efficient.

On your side of the question, I suppose the mere money advantage to represent some four or five years of present employment at home. I also take in to account the probability that the kind of repute attaching to such an experience and trust would be helpful afterwards.

These two paragraphs sum up all that I want to explain.

Georgy and Mary send their best love, and say (shaking their heads over their work) "but he never comes to Gad's".

It is of no use my urging "he won't" or "he can't"; they reply (you know what the sex is) "It's because you don't fix a time". Hereupon, I tear my hair, and exclaim, "Damn it, I *do* fix a time" (you know my passing bursts after the manner of my poor father); they only shake their heads again, and I scowl at them gloomily, and pretend that I am not looking at them. Now come. The Saturday or Sunday after Christmas Day—can't you come to us for a couple of days then? Katie will be with us, I dare say—and my son Charley—and his preposterous child. Think of the unmitigated nonsense of an inimitable grandfather!

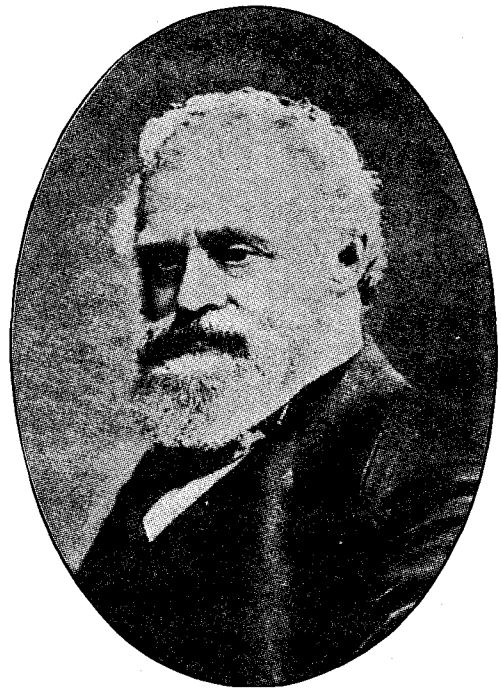
Charles Dickens the younger had married in 1861 Miss Bessie Evans, the daughter of Mr. Evans of Bradbury and Evans, for many years Dickens's publishers. The grandchild was the first of "another generation beginning to peep over the table".

On December 24, 1862, writing from Gad's Hill with many Christmas wishes, Dickens ends the Australian discussion.

It would be indelicate and selfish to gainsay your Australian conclusion. If I do not go (and I don't think I shall, now) it will unquestionably have brought down the scale on the home side.

On Monday last, the small number of one hundred and eighty-five thousand copies of *Somebody's Luggage* had been sold! I wonder how many purchasers have an idea of the number of hours of steamboat, railway train, dusty French walk, and looking out of window, are boiled down in *His Boots*?

His Boots perhaps needs explanation. *Somebody's Luggage* is one of the Christmas stories. An old headwaiter tells how a quantity of luggage was left behind at an inn by somebody who owed a small bill. The waiter, as a speculation, pays the bill and takes the luggage. This luggage is a typical Dickens framework for separate stories, since when opened it is found to contain a number of writings. The writing found in *His Boots*



Thomas Beard, "Charles Dickens's oldest friend", in his old age.

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is a touching little account of a sleepy French garrison town, of the good Corporal Théophile and his small friend Bebelle.

After that is a long gap in the correspondence and we come now to the last of these letters to Thomas Beard.

I am going to do an odd thing on Saturday. I cannot make up my mind whether to read the murder from *Oliver Twist*, or no. So I am going to have a handful of private friends in St. James's Hall, to try how it affects them, and so decide. Can you come? At half past eight. I will send you a card of admission.

There is no date, but internal evidence shows that it must have been written in November 1868, since it was on the fourteenth of that month that there was a private trial of the scene from *Oliver Twist*, in St. James's Hall. Dickens had returned from his enormously successful reading tour in America and was now embarking on his "Farewell Readings" at home. Forster strongly disapproved of this reading of the murder scene: he thought its effect was not "legitimate" or "desirable" and objected to the "supposed necessity for some new excitement". There was a "painful correspondence", but Dickens had his own way.

There is an appropriateness in the last letter to Thomas Beard dealing with its particular subject, because Dickens was then rapidly wearing himself out with the hard work and the travelling and the emotions of the readings, and it is mostly of these things that we shall hear in the letters to the other brother, Frank Carr Beard.

First of all we go back to February 14, 1859, when Dickens, still in Tavistock House, writes a friendly letter to Beard asking him to be his regular family doctor. The "Triumvirate of housekeepers" consisted of his daughters Mamie and Kate and his sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth.

My dear Frank Beard,

It has occurred to me and my Triumvirate of housekeepers, that there being always *some* medicinal attendance to be paid for, in the ordinary course of things, among the rest of the yearly bills, it is rather a ridiculous thing that you are not the attendant. Therefore if you will come to us just as you would go to anybody else, we shall be very glad to have you.

And as the Housemaid is ill abed this morning, and I think wants speedy looking to, perhaps you will see what is to be done for her, as soon as you conveniently can.

Faithfully yours always,

CHARLES DICKENS

Two years later in January, 1861, comes a line saying "I should like to be inspected, though I hope I can offer no new attractions".

This was written a few months before the second series of readings began in the spring of 1861. Although he wanted to be overhauled, his health had not then begun seriously at least to trouble him. It was in 1864 that symptoms graver perhaps than was then realized, first appeared. It was in February of that year that he had a real illness and was never so strong again afterwards. A mysterious lameness of the left foot gave him great pain and could not be cured. Two years later he had attacks of breathlessness and exhaustion and pain in the eye and hand, both ominously enough on the same side as his foot, the left. He realized that he had "got himself into a damaged state" but the moment he took a holiday he was encouraged to feel himself so much better that he overtaxed his strength once more. Most unluckily, too, in the year after these warnings he was in a terrible railway collision at Staplehurst. His carriage did not go over the line but hung over the bridge so that he was unhurt and able to work for hours among the injured, but the shock was a great and lasting one. Here is a letter to Frank Beard written the day after the accident.

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Saturday, Tenth June 1865.

I was in the terrible accident yesterday, and worked some hours among the dying and dead.

I was in the carriage that did not go down, but hung in the air over the side of the broken bridge. I was not touched—scarcely shaken. But the terrific nature of the scene makes me think that I should be the better for a gentle composing draught or two. I must away to Gad's directly to quiet their minds. John would get made and would bring down any prescription you might let me have here. Don't come to me at Gad's yourself, unless you can stay all night and be comfortable. In that case, do.

Ever Yours,

C. D.

(I can't sign my flourish today!)

Some months before he had written to Beard about his foot: "Here is that confounded foot as bad as ever again. I suffered tortures all last night and never closed my eyes. We are now at work with the Poppy fomentations again".

In February, 1866, he writes to Beard suggesting a consultation.

When I am in the rare circumstances of being the least amiss, I am so surrounded on all sides by anxious people—here at Gad's Hill, and where not—that I don't like you to bear the whole responsibility of my being out of sorts, and don't like them to worry me. Therefore if you don't find me "picking up" and promising to be permanently picking up, next Monday, let us have a conference with someone, and so afterwards go on wheels. I have a notion of Brinton of Brook Street. Priestly (for whom I have a great personal liking) once took him to Wills, and no harm came of it. You see that my expectations of another adviser are not exaggerated.

Dr. Brinton was duly consulted and said "only remarkable irritability of the heart". That made Dickens feel cheerful, for he said "I am not so foolish as to suppose that all my work can have been achieved without *some* penalty". His gallant spirit soared up again

A French cartoon showing Dickens crossing the Channel in one stride, bringing his great novels from London to Paris.

and he at once made a bargain for a new set of readings. Nevertheless he was soon arranging to be again "thoroughly examined" by Beard. The examination however was not to stand in the way of dinner.

As I have told the chef at Verey's that I am going to dine there, let us still do so—with Wilkie—at 7. Will you send round to Wilkie and let him know with my love that I expect him at Verey's aforesaid to dine with us at 7 this day?

With the letter is one from Wilkie Collins.

My dear B,

Many thanks. Tell Dickens I will be at Verey's at 7 with pleasure.

Ever yours,

W. C.

In November, 1867, Dickens landed in America on the second visit there and did not come home again till May, 1868. He had a great welcome and made nearly twenty thou-

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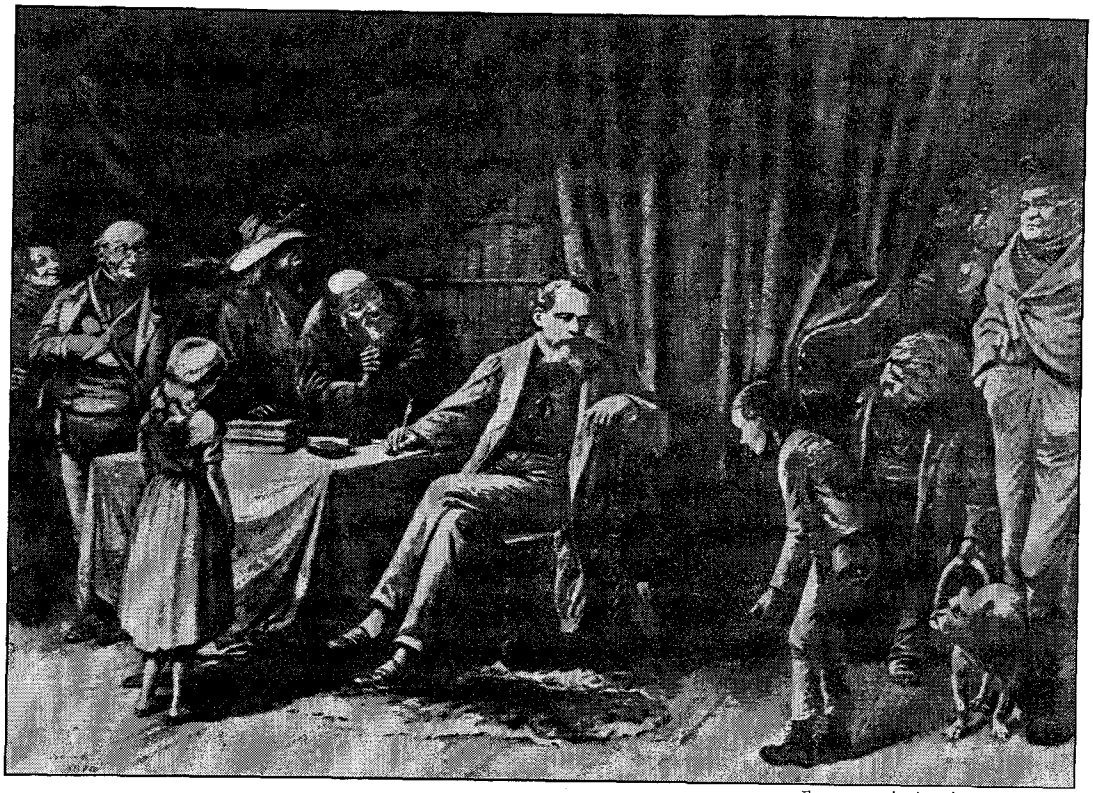

From a painting by W. H. Beard

DICKENS SURROUNDED BY HIS CHARACTERS

Long before his death the custom of representing Dickens as the godlike creator of actual figures was widespread.

sand pounds by his readings, but the strain was very severe and he was constantly on the verge of a breakdown. To make matters worse he agreed on his return to give a series of "Farewell Readings" at home, and began them in October, 1868. He had to give up and rest but persisted in going on again as soon as it was possible. On April nineteenth he wrote from Blackburn:

Is it possible that anything in my medicine can have made me extremely giddy, extremely uncertain of my footing (especially on the left side) and extremely indisposed to raise my hands to my head? These symptoms made me very uncomfortable on Saturday night, and all yesterday. I have taken the medicine twice a day only, and have taken barely a bottle in all. If you can, send me one word in answer by return to the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool, do.

After Blackburn he was due to read at Preston, and there he completely broke down and wrote to Beard from Blackpool.

I received your kind note on coming here this afternoon. As you evidently thought the symptoms worthy of immediate attention, I at once telegraphed to you my tomorrow's and Friday's addresses. The said symptoms have greatly moderated since Sunday; but there they are all *on the left side*. Six weeks will carry me through the Readings, if you can fortify me a little bit, and then, please God, I may do as I like.

A consultation of Sir Thomas Watson with Beard followed and they peremptorily forbade any more readings. Dickens grew better

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and was desperately anxious to keep faith with his public and to recompense the Chappells for their loss. Sir Thomas Watson relented and allowed twelve more readings without railway travelling. These took place between January and March, 1870, and at the same time Dickens was hard at work on *Edwin Drood*. Whether these last readings actually caused his death no one can say, but the statistics kept by Mr. Beard show what a toll they took. Mr. Beard was in nightly attendance and made a record of his patient's pulse. Poor Forster must have felt inclined to say an affectionately reproachful "I told you so" when he saw that the scene of Nancy and Sikes, against which he had protested in vain, caused a more lasting effect than any of the other readings. Here is the record:

Tuesday, January 11, 1870.
Dickens Chas. Pulse before reading *David Copperfield* and the Trial from *Pickwick*, (normal) 72; immediately after reading 95. After 15 minutes' rest, 74.

Tuesday, January 18—70.
Pulse before reading *Dr. Marigold* and *Bob Sawyer's Party*, 82. After reading 99. 15 minutes' rest, 84.

Friday, January 21—70.
Pulse before reading *Boots at the Holly Tree* and Nancy's murder from *Oliver Twist* 90. After reading 112. 15 minutes after, 100.

Tuesday, January 25, 1870.
Pulse not taken before reading *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Chops*. After reading 94. 15 minutes after, 82.

Tuesday, February 1, 1870.
Pulse after 20 minutes' rehearsal *before* reading *Boots at the Holly Tree* and the "murder" Nancy and Sikes 90. After "murder" and before *Gamp* 118, after *Gamp* 108. 15 minutes after, 80.

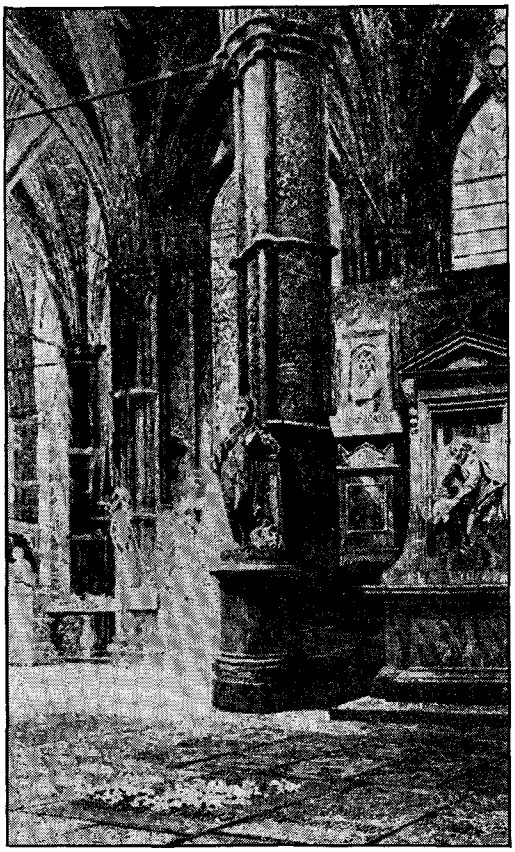
Tuesday, February 8, 1870.
Pulse before reading *Dombey & Son* 91. After, 114. After reading *Bob Sawyer* 96. 15 minutes after, 94.

Tuesday, February 15, 1870.
Pulse before reading *Boots at the Holly Tree* and the "murder" Nancy and Sykes 90—after 124. After reading *Gamp* 118. 20 minutes after, 98.

Tuesday, February 22, 1870.
Pulse before reading *Nicholas Nickleby* 84. After 106. After reading *Chops* 112, and after 15 minutes 84.

Tuesday, March 1, 1870.
Pulse before reading *David Copperfield* 100, after 124. After Trial from *Pickwick* 124. 15 minutes after, 88.

Tuesday, March 8, 1870.
Pulse before reading *Boots at the Holly Tree* 94. After reading 112. After reading Nancy and Sikes (the murder) 120. After reading *Bob Sawyer's Party* 108. 15 minutes after, 82.



Dickens's grave in Westminster Abbey.

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Tuesday, March 15, 1870.
Pulse before reading *Christmas Carol* 108. After reading, 110. After reading Trial from *Pickwick* 110. 15 minutes after, 94. Twenty minutes after that, 94.

The facts of Dickens's death are sufficiently well known. On June eighth he was working at his Châlet till late in the afternoon and after writing some letters indoors came to dinner. He was obviously very ill and after a few incoherent words tried to rise but collapsed with the words "on the ground". He survived for nearly twenty-four hours but never regained consciousness and died at ten minutes past six in the evening of the ninth of June, 1870.

"THE EMPTY CHAIR"

The picture by W. Boucher which appeared in "Judy" June 22, 1870, and was reprinted all over the world. The abandoned sheets of "Edwin Drood" lie on the desk (which is the same as that on page 530) and "Dickens's chair" had been famous long before his death.

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WHAT THE GERMANS READ

by George N. Shuster

In Leo Frobenius's Frankfurt museum there is a series of fascinating African demons—on canvas, to be sure—which were copied by very patient artists from frescoes in ancient caves. I fancy that as a group they symbolize pretty well the average German's impression of the "forces" now unleashed in his country, making for revolution, reaction, turmoil, and peace. His is a very lively time and place, but in all probability hardly conducive to the highest kind of creative literary activity. All over Europe the arts have been short of breath these past two years; and it may be that the rather feverish activity of the preceding decade was expended on striking the final chords of an old era rather than on writing a prelude to a new age. Such speculative guesses a foreigner like myself can merely repeat, not judge. Of necessity we operate with charts no better than Columbus's, and can seldom be quite sure that we have hit upon India and not upon some ignoble San Salvador.

At any rate the "new age" has definitely arrived. And when the German confronts it, he normally looks from one of two points: either he will be motivated, like Hermann Steyr, by a boundless loathing for the era which antedated the war and so ready to believe that the present simply must be an improvement, or he will be repelled by what is happening and anxious to seek a refuge somewhere in the past or the future. But it is the distinguishing characteristic of this future to be utterly dark. Throughout the nineteenth century men were encouraged by a confidence in progress. Some expected more than others, but there was general agreement that the next morning would be nicer than this. Other centuries, as may be seen from the writings of Saint Augustine, were dominated by a feeling that downfall was approaching. It is the striking peculiarity of our epoch not to have the faintest idea of the nature of oncoming events. No augur speaks, though thousands are consulted. The natural consequence is that the prophets of weal or woe are quite evenly divided.

This omnipresent consciousness of impending change tends, in a measure, to lame effort even in practical life. French statesmen cannot decide whether there is going to be peace or war; the American investor is unable to tell whether current hard times will end in a sudden catastrophe or a quick rebound into affluence. The result is a weird form of psychological paralysis, which of course also affects cultural activity. Quantitatively speaking, this activity has not decreased. The prophets of good things to come are emphasizing with what is almost vehemence the reconstructive values—honesty, objectivity, spiritual daring, moral decision. For their part the augurs of gloom are urging all the known expedients for putting the house in order—and oddly enough these turn out to be much the same values as those stressed by the optimists. But the glorious freedom of the creative temperament to accept things as they are and "sub-

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mit them to the desires of the mind" appears to have evaporated.

In other words: German culture during the immediate present is like a tray covered with foods which may be partaken of either by a man convalescing from an illness or by one who wishes to train against a possible illness. It is, therefore, not a Goethe era. Grillparzer said of that great man that though he sometimes wrote badly he never ate badly. More transcendentally expressed, his life was devoted to the principle of discriminating absorption—to the gathering of impressions, endlessly various, which combined food with flavour. His genius coincided with an historical moment of stable rhythm, all outward events being powerless to jar a relatively static civilization. Today most Germans feel that viewing life as Goethe did would be a form of tawdry hedonism, however strongly they may wish that lovely Weimar could come to life again. Perhaps some species of asceticism is native to every thoughtful modern. One may be vinous or lecherous, but at least one must toil without stopping for more than sandwiches at noon. Is that why so much of even English contemporary writing (witness Mr. Eliot's poetry) is primarily research? At all events, younger German intelligence has sought out hard-working, muscle-straining, much-exacting masters—Lagarde the ethicist, the omnivorous Burckhardt, Görres whose journalism was a constant flame, Lenin the inflexible.

On the surface it all looks like revolution and counter-revolution, the second being almost as imperiously uncompromising in its attitude toward old values as the first. But no doubt Hans Naumann (whose fine commentary on recent German literature richly deserves such praise as I can give it) looks deeper when he says that the new alignments are merely variants of realism and romanticism. It follows that if we separate the past decade of German writing from antecedent German literature we are simply preferring to hear an age-old cultural debate stated in new terms. Now as ever the struggle is for an adequate philosophical synthesis, for the "aggregate self", and for the right individual escape from the clutches of the mass. But the conditions under which these things can be attained have greatly altered. The philosopher is now Martin Heidegger who premises "emotional states", and not Immanuel Kant, who spots you so many categories. And shall the aggregate self be sought, as picturesque Herr Hitler would have it, in race and blood, or in cultural tradition, as Professor Curtius believes? And of course the "mass" is now a compactly organized society inside which the individual is perilously near being lassoed by economic disaster and Karl Marx.

Well, we shall begin with one side of the story. The scene is a theatre just off Unter den Linden, where a Socialist committee has staged a revolutionary play. It is Bert Brecht's *Dreigroschen Oper* (*The Beggar's Opera*). The central figure is a gangster, attributed to London, but easily enough visualized in Chicago or Berlin. Cinema like, the play unreels a cross-section of the modern inferno: all the vices of Dante appear in real life, caught up from the streets, the dives and the gaols, with their unscrupulous romance, illogical mixture of sentiment with evil-doing, blasphemies and treasons. A cloud of blatant jazz melody floats over the whole; the songs careen through that cloud like hard, glittering planes. It is all as clean-cut as the edge of a cigarette, as close to the brink of nihilism as a suicide on a window-ledge. No more puttering around with Eugene O'Neill in poetized psychiatry—no more of Mr. Shaw's saucy Georgian-reform version of *Pippa Passes*. All the spotty cards are on the table,

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the game is on, the stakes are the end of everything. Brecht is the last word that will be said by the long list of playwrights who followed Wedekind—a list which many good people believe to have been ordained to revive humanity's waning belief in Satan. But what magnificent irony in the conception which evokes a communist universe with the help of "Americanized" art!

We shall hasten now to the other side. The scene is almost any poet's house in South Germany. Perhaps it is even Max Mell's, on the farthest edge of Vienna, as remote from the city as this "playwright of the soul" has been able to get. Or possibly it is Ruth Schaumann's in Munich—Ruth Schaumann who writes lyrics like those of the great mystics, makes images of stone or bronze with a kind of *primitif* depth and whimsy, has as many children meanwhile as the virtuous queen, and yet does it all so tenderly and broodingly that one rubs one's eyes, not comprehending how so Amazonian a performance is to be attributed to so serene and beautiful a woman. The poet is yours to choose from a dozen—Richard Billinger, who wanders into cities enshrined in something akin to a halo of twin allegiance to nature and thought; Gertrud von der Fort, most exquisite and consummate of the Catholic writers; or Alfons Paquet, who seems the finest of the younger Lutherans. "Beseelte Wirklichkeit"—realism inspirited—is the phrase which Naumann applies to all their work, in which there is, indeed, irony, but perhaps the irony which Brecht has yet to discover.

Here are the poles to which modern German literature almost invariably tends. On the one hand a revolutionary naturalism; on the other hand, a spiritually motivated realism, fond of analogies, it is true, but no longer symbolistic. But the mean between these extremes is missing, or nearly so. There is a conservative modern German literature (typified by Paul Ernst) and a "liberal" modern German literature (*e.g.*, Thomas Mann), but the men who write it belong to an older era. The younger people are revolutionists or vanquishers of revolution through otherworldliness. The first are not necessarily proletarian Communists, though many are. Nor are the otherworldly writers all orthodox. Alfred Döblin, seeking the principle of the spirit which overpowers matter, turns to India. Mystical in the sense of idealism rather than of religion are all who follow the older poets—Rilke, Spitteler, Stefan George. It is the ambition of the *Tat-Kreis*, for instance, to find God outside the churches. Even so the debt of the newer literature to the Catholic and Lutheran faiths is undeniably vast. Ernst Barlach, representative certainly of his age, is unintelligible apart from Christian sentiment. Or what is Franz Werfel, the Jew, but a mouthpiece for the appeal which contemporary Catholicism holds for the sensitive thinker?

But, as we have said, the mean is missing. Even modern German fiction is not the result of pleasurable contemplation of reality.*

* If I were asked (which is not the case) to enumerate ten significant recent German novels, I would name these: Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*), which is perhaps the ultimate breviary of German humanistic scepticism and the best negative analysis of modern civilization to have been completed by a German artist; Hermann Steyr's *Nathanael Maechler*, one of the most revealing stories of a strange Silesian novelist whose major concern has been "the quest for God"—a gloomy, knotted but thoroughly Teutonic book; Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* (*War*), which brings the catastrophe close up and is in addition a fascinating illustration of the "new manner" in German fiction; Arnolt Bronnen's *O.S.* (the initials stand for the German equivalent of Upper Silesia), an ultra-nationalistic novel of tremendous suggestive strength and of curious ideology; Hans Grimm's *Volk ohne Raum* (*People without room*), which dramatizes the major German sociological problem and at the same time paints a broad canvas of colonial activity; Alfred Döblin's *Alexanderplatz, Berlin,* less notable for its Joycean method than for its ability to mirror the

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Nor can it be termed Aristotelian; though it aims to effect *catharsis*, this usually becomes baroque, out of all relation to Greek poise. There was a time, and not long ago, when Teutonic fiction aimed to evoke the moods of English realism and romance. Then the naturalists, as witness Hauptmann's *The Weavers*, painted the explosion of social dynamite. Where this practice abides (for example in that most masterly of books about the war, Ludwig Renn's *Krieg*), it is faced so radically, so drastically, that one can only speak of a "linear naturalism" in which the quarry is the inner dimensions rather than the full contours of reality. To be sure, there is still plenty of "popular" writing in a cosmopolitan spirit. The Vicki Baums and Lion Feuchtwangers of Germany are intelligible everywhere, but *intelligent* in the specific German sense they are not.

It follows as a matter of course that a hiatus exists between the great public and the genuinely creative writer. The illustrated weeklies and the pulp magazines consumed in the Fatherland are hardly up to the level set for that kind of thing in the United States. Nevertheless the number of readers who keep abreast is, despite all social and economic changes, much larger than the corresponding group in this country. In the first place, young academicians out of work take to literature as a field of action in which their diligence, denied a scope in the world of affairs, may find exercise. Secondly, the German book trade is intelligently organized and managed: it is not the victim of torrents of bad newspaper criticism, and it at least tries to avoid cutting its own economic throat. Sometimes a writer attains to universality by finding the point midway between the elect and the masses. Remarque is here the best possible example.

Returning now to the revolutionists, we shall find that many literary forms, especially the drama, have been utilized by them. Sometimes they are genuinely proletarian; again they are individuals whom the turmoil of the age has branded. When Hauptmann or Ernst von Wildenbruch placed social injustice squarely before the public of the nineteen-hundreds as an appeal to conscience or a motif for cynicism, they were simply rendering vocal the desires of a humanitarian era which awoke out of easy indignations to the crass horror of the war. It was inevitable that the greatest of the humanitarians should move a step farther, towards a symbolism which (like its French counterpart) was the expression of an individual's search for the humanitarian foundations. Why care? Why live, in the final analysis? And so German naturalism, in Hauptmann himself and more clearly in others, gradually turned to neo-romantic evocations of the spiritual universe —evocations which were often arresting and rich, however nebulous they may have been. Who, for example, has been able to define Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*? But whom has it not stirred, by reason of a prodigality like that of the tapestried windows of the Sainte-Chapelle?

heartless, appalling tempo of proletarian existence in modern Berlin and for its underlying accompaniment of fierce idealism; Franz Werfel's *Barbara*, which is its author's most complete profession of faith and likewise an unforgettable study of pre-war Austria and Europe; Robert Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, the first part of a projected two-volume novel, which may be described as the work of an ultra-modern Thackeray who has taken much the same subject as is treated in Werfel's *Barbara*—one of the few really witty books in the newer German output; Franz Herwig's *Eingeengten* (*Those hedged in*), the work of an outstanding Catholic novelist (recently deceased) who knew proletarian Berlin and had the ability to present the workingman as he is with rare sympathetic realism; and Paula Grogger's *Das Grimmingtor*, a young Austrian woman's evocation of a milieu which suggests *The Saga of Gösta Berling* without suffering by the comparison. (She will have the Nobel Prize some time.)

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Then expressionism unsettled literature almost before it did the arts. It is a natural, constantly recurring German phenomenon, which has relied in essence upon a very definite method of deflecting impressions. A given event or object is never the same as one's consciousness of it; and when this consciousness is materialized in such a way as to make that part of it most closely related to the subject, the nucleus of the composition, the process is expressionistic. Accordingly one may argue that old morality plays, notably *Everyman*, exemplify the method, though in a naïve way. Characters in them do not exist for reality's sake; they appear, rather, as aids in giving concrete form to the author's meditation on human life. But though the motifs and theses which dominated the German drama immediately before and after the war are ultra-modern, sometimes Nietzschean or rebellious, it is interesting to see that the pre-war playwrights adhered pretty closely to the mediaeval morality pattern, and often used titles instead of names.

Naturally enough the great conflict, creative of so many questions and anxieties, gave a great impetus to this variety of dramatic expression. But such plays as Fritz von Unruh's *Ein Geschlecht* (*A Generation*)—in which the furies unleashed by the downfall of civilization are curbed, after an almost orgiastic struggle, by mother love—were dramatized ideas rather than spectacles, and so as time went on the writers learned to fuse what was effective in the new method as a protest against the naturalistic emptiness of the old theatre and plastic story-telling. Something more nearly akin to the Greek drama emerged, the stage manifesting doctrine in action and ideals in relief. One side of this development may be followed in the successive plays of Franz Werfel, from *Böckgesang* (*Goat Song*) to *Das Reich Gottes in Böhmen* (*The Kingdom of God in Bohemia*); the other side can be seen to good advantage in the work of Georg Kaiser, whose *Die Bürger von Calais* (*The Burghers of Calais*) is almost the high watermark of expressionism, and whose later *Nebeneinander* (*Side by Side*) illustrates the current trend.

This last trend, discernible in the arts as well as in letters, has been flaunted and flouted as *Die neue Sachlichkeit* (The New Factualness). The expressionistic conception is still dominant here; but whereas in the older writers the outline of deflected reality —or reality recaptured from consciousness— was made to vibrate with pathos and passion, even as religious belief may be said to vibrate in baroque churches, the newer men give it virility through understatement. Thus Bert Brecht, or better still Renn (to go from the drama to fiction). All has been eliminated excepting the spare framework of reality.

It goes without saying that the complete story of contemporary German literature spills over these intrinsically formal barriers, taking shape and colour from the multiform interests accompanying human existence. It is a rich accumulation, but not a treat for the cosmopolitan appetite. Perhaps its wealth is poured only into the lap of him who sits patiently until all comes to him, as the birds and beasts ventured into Thoreau's hands. Yet it can hardly be a thing of no consequence even to those who refuse to sit and wait, because its dominant note is a realism, largely inward, which the intelligence of Germany has managed to impose, despite the reluctance and indifference of the masses. If this intelligence continues to fight "hard and clean", the nation will have a future. There is a way in which Nietzsche is plain common sense.

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LETTERS FROM GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

TO CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS, JR. — PART ONE

Introductory Note

To the general public George Edward Woodberry, who died January 2, 1930, at his ancestral home in Beverly, Massachusetts, is known as a man of letters. The following correspondence, the first from his hand to be published, should serve to acquaint his many admirers with a side of his distinguished career which has hitherto been known only to his personal friends.

George Edward Woodberry's early cultural influences were Henry Adams and Charles Eliot Norton. In 1877, while still a Harvard undergraduate, he catalogued Lowell's library. The same year found him a regular and important contributor to the *Atlantic* under Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Twenty-five years later he was commonly regarded as the literary successor of Lowell in the New England line. His collected essays, published in six volumes in 1919, give proof of his scholarly and critical industry, range and acumen. In addition he was the biographer of Poe, Hawthorne and Emerson; the editor of the centenary edition of Shelley, the standard compilation; and, with Stedman, the editor of the complete poetic and prose works of Poe. On the death of Rupert Brooke he wrote the introduction to Brooke's poems.

It is as a poet, however, that Woodberry preferred to be remembered. Beginning with *The North Shore Watch*, a threnody addressed to a boyhood friend, untimely dead, Woodberry continued to write verse almost to the last year of his life. His most popular lyrics, such as *The Secret, O Inexpressible as Sweet*, and the Gibraltar sonnets, are preserved in many anthologies. Unfortunately his volumes of verse, *Wild Eden, The Flight, Ideal Passion, The Roamer*, are now out of print. In all probability, however, a selection of his favourite poems will be made for republication in the near future.

It was not an accident that in his first important poem, written while still in his twenties, Woodberry should have chosen friendship for his theme; for friendship subsequently became a major theme of his rich and difficult life, especially friendship and sympathy with youth.

The poet and man of letters in Woodberry ever competed with the teacher and friend. From the year following his graduation from Harvard he was an instructor or lecturer in American colleges and universities down to his later years, notably at Nebraska, Columbia, California, Amherst, Kenyon, Wisconsin, Cornell. He possessed a genius for winning his classes. Year after year at Columbia he was elected the favourite professor; long after his departure from there his former students and comrades founded the Woodberry Society in token of friendship. This tie continued down to his death.

Fortunately it is not only by word of mouth of those who knew Woodberry, but also in his letters that a later generation can receive the evidence of his warmth, his wisdom, his magic. The correspondence given below is

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typical of many, for Woodberry's communications with his friends increased, if anything, with time, as his literary and academic labours decreased. But it is also unique in this important respect: the greater part, written during the first year and more, was addressed to a person unknown and unseen. The result is a wider autobiographical disclosure than in letters to his intimates; the New England spiritual background lies revealed, the reticence disappears.

Loomis, a young reporter on a Connecticut paper, reading and liking a poem in the *Atlantic*, impulsively wrote Woodberry in appreciation. And Woodberry responded.

M. C.

* * *

Beverly, Dec. 15, 1911

My dear Mr. Loomis—

No—I am not an editor; but that does not matter. I am so unused to hearing any echo of my verses that you gave me a great surprise with your note, and I was glad that my lines had found one reader at least who wanted them. So I am very grateful to you for telling me that you welcomed the verses. And I wish we were near enough to talk—we would try which of us could come the most croppers over the prejudices of the other; it would be a pleasant game. I am a man old enough to be your father, but I never had the fortune to meet him in my generation; somehow the men of my generation never seemed to get acquainted with one another. But I have had better luck with the next generation and know scores of them, having been part of life a professor in a college, so that it is the most natural thing in the world to me to be writing to a youth and a candidate for the laurel, and of course about his verses. If you are not too shy, and would like to confide to me some of your verses, I would love to see them; for verses, even though they be bad, have a charm for me, especially if they have that delightful kind of badness which is goodness in the making. You will find me a very truthful and hard critic, but one who loves poetry and sometimes even poets, and at all events always respects the leaf of Apollo on good and bad alike. You don't really say that you wish to waste your treasures on a man who is not even an "editor", but perhaps (being Christmas-time) you may let me have a look.

Perhaps I am writing with a lighter hand than I should to a stranger; but I know well enough how a youth often seems much isolated and at a loss in the beginning of the ways, and I have done a good deal of wandering myself, and I am quite truthful in saying that if I can do you any friendly service you would like I shall take great pleasure in doing it according to my opportunity.

I don't quite understand your postscript question about immortal life on the earth, and so I don't try to answer it. Please tell me how old you are, and where you have lived your boyhood, if you write to me again and send me verses; for that would help me to understand; almost all youthful poetry is obscure in expression; and mine has always been so described from the beginning even unto now; but a poem that is the real stuff sometimes has a meaning of its own (like a crystal) and only the gazer sees it. So, if anyone tells me he "doesn't understand" what I meant, I tell him to understand what he likes by it, and 'twill be just as well, no doubt; for the use of poetry is to unlock the other man's soul sometimes, isn't it? Believe me, honestly, and quite on the commonplace level of a letter,

Your very willing friend,

G. E. Woodberry

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Beverly, Dec. 31, 1911

My dear Battell—

I meant you to have this great packet for a Christmas morning, but I didn't get round to it; and today I have your second note, just as I am doing it up for New Year's. You didn't send too much, and I have disfigured the margins with little notes to amuse you. There is not much occasion for detail; your own dissatisfactions are the best critic for detail; and, on your level, you write very well, though you must, of course, "level up" a good deal still. You have some sense of the jewel-limit of the art,—I mean of the phrase, the line; and also some sense of the longer flow of style, as in the last half of the sonnet I marked; and you will readily obtain mastery in technique, which comes with practice and with that indefinable taste that at last unconsciously governs all, both subject and manner. The elements are here,—only there must be time and fortune to allow them to grow and cohere and refine.

I have known a good many young fellows in their time of poetry; but it generally passes with the bloom on their faces; I think that it is in you to stay, for better or worse,—you will never be quite happy without it, nor, perhaps, with it. But the poetic temperament is in you, and working toward expression, and it is probably there to have its will of you. . . . I can't congratulate you on a masterpiece,—but you would hardly expect that; and I can assure you that, so far as the verses go, you certainly have good reason to try what is in you, both as a writer and as a soul,—I mean you can learn to write and you have a heart and senses to feed you with matter. And I hope you may find all the help you may need; but I think you are one of those born to go much alone. Yes, I think from what you tell me that you will have a good deal of trouble with yourself as you go on, and I judge you have a brave heart for the road; so I am not much disturbed, for a brave heart is a great solver of life. You may feel a bit lost and a bit daring; and, if you will let me say so, you must learn to live alone much, and yet to be friendly and companionable, to have at least imperfect sympathies with others so as to understand them, and while keeping a free soul yourself to allow others their freedom, too; for the danger of a lonely life's degenerating into a bad and hard pride is great. You may not see why I say this, but that doesn't matter.

If you can't have faith in what is held up to you for faith, you must find things to believe in yourself, for a life without faith in something is too narrow a space to live in. But I realize how little use is anything I can say to you in a letter. It is only that your life interests me now more than your verses, for it is the soil in which your poetry must grow and your own usefulness and happiness flower. It is plain to me that there are confusions and gleams before you; and you must walk amid them alone, as we all do,—we who are alive and know, in a rather somnolent and easily satisfied world that is not made for us apparently so much as it is for other people. But you will always be a listener to your own heart, I guess; and courage and patience are great gods still. You must learn to write well, and mostly that comes from loving the poets and handling them over and over; it is not by criticism that a poet grows, any more than it is by criticism that friendship is made; but it is being a friend and having a friend that sometimes makes a good air for the plant. I wish I might be of real use to you, though being of use is not the ground of friendship, in my gospel at least, —but I do write with some affection for you, who have come to me so happily with your

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heart in your hands. But your being a poet has nothing to do with that: your being a poet is a practical and detached matter, and means labour in writing and growing in your own powers of knowing and feeling till you get all humanity transfused into your own blood; you can do that without me. Our being friends is our private concern, and quite a different affair. Whether you are a poet or not, we can be friends, and I have no doubt we shall be.

I would rather talk with you than write to you; but I can't ask you here now, because our old house in winter is a frozen-up place, and we have no rooms. I live under the old family roof with my brothers and sister, of whom I am the youngest; but when summer comes I shall have a place for you, for a little visit,—and after that you will feel that you have known me always. And I can't come to you now either, because I am a slave to the lamp, and writing a book of African travel that is already a year behind time. I am going to shut myself up to doing that till the burden is off my shoulders. But I hope we shall meet, and talk, and grow such friends that each may help the other a long while yet to come in the thousand ways that one can, in this rather mixed-up world. I hope you will write to me just what you want to; you needn't be the least afraid of being disrespectful,—that rather made me smile,—for I am not at all an "awful" person; nor have I got the dreadful "master's eye" that kept you off of college grounds. When I was in college, we didn't pay much attention to the "master's eye". I guess that was a bugaboo of yours. I was a professor some years but none of the boys wore talismans against me, I assure you.

I don't think your not going to college makes any necessary difference to you; it might have been better or worse; you must get the power of intellectual economy and the clear appreciation of form and order in some other way. A man who goes to college has a better chance, generally, today; but it may give a boy such a chill that he never warms up again; there is a good deal of "luck" in college life, as in all the rest of it. You have had contact with life instead, and no doubt you feel old; a man, normally, is oldest in feeling at about twenty-two; he thinks he has drained the glass, when he has only rinsed out the goblet. I am not afraid of your age, or youth, or disrespect,—so here's a free field to you! And may it be a happy New Year—1912—and may one part of its happiness be a new friend for both of us. Now, forgive all my advice, and take the good-will and affection as from an old friend, who had more right.

G. E. W.

Jan. 27 (I began this yesterday, but had a caller), 1912

Dear Battell—

I was glad to have you about again—and the second note was another grace, like a bird's coming back after he has flown off. Just mull over it all—keep mulling! You can't hatch an egg except after nature's time. One doesn't write letters much on these things; the tone of the voice is a great part of what is said on such matters; and you can't even remember mine. It is important to think as clearly as you can, and as far as you can; most people think only a little way, but you can think farther, and ought to, and not let the horizon of fog close round you too soon. You go about it in a good way, but I should advise you to go carefully and *mull* a long time when you know you are feeling more than you are thinking: not that reason solves all things, but "instinct" is generally a name for the unconscious, that is, the unknown or ignorance; and often it is not necessary ig-

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norance, but only that person's ignorance. I am myself very shy of anything that calls itself "telepathy", as interpreted by those who use the word; and, as for "teaching",—your best pupil, dear boy, is yourself. Don't think too much about yourself, but be content in general and for daily life to live your life in the stage of it that you find yourself in. You are doing that, so far as I see, very honestly and heartily. I wrote a poem, called *Demeter*, in the *Outlook* (somewhere about May 1910) that is perhaps as good a reply to your first letter as I could give you. It will at any rate suggest to you my own point of view. You can write to me about anything, but I should always like a little "news" about your ordinary daily life such as a boy writes "home". I do hope you won't show my letters about much,—it would embarrass me, because I only write with *you* in mind. I never much cared for an "audience".

About my poems, they are all in one volume (*Poems*, Macmillan). The books that my students liked best were *Heart of Man* (The main essay is rather stiff reading, but I would like you to read *The Ride*),—and besides that *The Torch* (out of print, but to be reissued soon) and *The Inspiration of Poetry*. *The Appreciation of Literature* is a popular treatment of the general subject of what and how to read in literature. If you will tell me when your birthday is, I would be glad to give you either the *Poems* or *Heart of Man*,—it would seem a little like making you a visit.

It's awfully cold, and my fingers are stiff. I will send you little notes, perhaps. Please don't get excited over the "instinct" and "telepathy" matters; you've time enough for that,—and try to think things out more first; "teaching" is very bad for the teacher, I assure you. Keep on *living* it, in "little ways"—don't dig round growing plants too much.

What an "adviser" I am getting to be! It is a sign of my great age, no doubt,—but then, you, too, have another birthday.

Always yours,

G. E. W.

Feb. 2, 1912

Dear Battell—

I am glad you have a Saint at all that you know of, and you couldn't have a better one than St. Valentine (whether Christian or pagan),—and may he flutter his dove-wings round you long and long!

I am enclosing your cuttings, thinking you may like them again; *The Enigma* is all right, and may your Saint bring you the answer at his convenience,—it might save you a lot of guessing. Your moral disquisition is also all right as morals,—but as poetry, dear me!—You certainly don't think that "Damn not that which offends your taste" has any *poetry* in it, do you? Nor has it any music. You mustn't write like that! And the editorials and story are all right. Editorials ought to be as simple as the commandments in style—but they need not resemble the commandments in any other respect. Yours are direct, easy, and have the tone of familiar converse,—as if someone were really talking behind the types, that they should have. None of these things are great, but they don't have to be; the occasions for anything "great" seldom occur, and when there is anything "great", it takes a long while to find it out,—the occasion is generally gone. But you write well enough,—apart from that I suppose you sent me the pieces not for "judgment" but just to communicate something more of yourself than gets into a letter. You needn't fear to bore me with sending thoughts, nor think I can feed only on "chattiness",—just don't think about it at all, but let your mind

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and heart and pen run on as is natural at the moment. Being natural is half the victory *in everything*. Here's a dictum for you.

Yes, I met Lee once at Northampton, and I read one or two of his books, and should be pleased to see another; but I don't think I should be sufficiently pleased to justify you in *buying* one for me. If you have an extra copy, all right; but really it is not worth your *buying for me*. I am glad of his London successes. What he writes is a bit too "smart" for me, too clever. I never liked clever boys very much; and clever men,—well, I would rather go to a "continuous performance" of almost any other description. But that may be only a matter of endurance; I gave out on "clever" people some years ago.

I will remember St. Valentine,—when I am glad I knew you while you were still 22, tho' I have no prejudice against 23. I laugh even at 13—which I suppose is ridiculous. I didn't let my fancy romp about your age, but it's better to know, and I am glad you confided in the end. It's one less thing to think about. I am brooding away at my blessed book,—and putting off thinking about spring.

Good night,—

G. E. W.

Feb. 23, 1912

My dear Battell—

All your letters have come, and I have been thinking them over, little by little, from time to time; but, for a day or two, I want you to comfort yourself with just knowing that I care, and want to help you,—and with this beautiful March wind, if you can enjoy it, which to me is better than thinking and puts a cold, pure bracing strength into my life that is better than thought,—a kind of spirit-blood of health. I am in the midst of a writing spell—you must know what that is—and I am going on finely, and I must profit by these clear spells of expression, you know,—for that is the way I earn my living, for one thing.

But I shall soon write you a good long letter,—and you needn't be in a great hurry about these things. If I were you, I would cultivate a little detachment from them if I could. Fixing one's thoughts on a subject sometimes takes away one's power of thinking,—it causes a kind of self-hypnotism; and, as a writer, I often relax my grip on my subject, for I am apt to grow too intense,—and so I get back my suppleness and play into my intellectual muscles (so to speak), and get the "detachment" that is necessary to one who has any artistic life. I remember old Professor Child at Harvard telling me, when I was in my teens, that every man with talents was entitled to thirty years of preparation before he need do anything,—the years that Milton's father gave to the boy to grow up. And you may remember that Christ took thirty years; and oriental years are much longer than ours, I can tell you. So I have good precedent for even an American boy in thinking there is no need for him to be in a hurry in the things you write of,—the moods, the thoughts of that inner life. Do things that cheer you, and make you mortally happy, and please other people in little ways of the common life,—and take enjoyment in the sense of nature and the tasks of the day. Be happy,—that is the best thing for a youth to do. I know a good deal about youth, dear boy.

So, wait patiently, and I will write you a good letter, though it may not be altogether to your mind, but it will be "intelligent" of you and of these things. And meanwhile, be good, and mind, and don't think too much about it,—you've seven years to go yet, if

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you get your rights, you see.—And then, think how many people are looking after everything, as if they made the world,—poor urchins, like Roosevelt, and Pinchot, and Shuster, and the Tolstoyans and the Nietzscheans and the Jonesians,—multitudes, just like the tribes in the Old Testament who are always "coming up"! Let them have their "try",—and meanwhile you and I will do our day's work and be kind to each other, and "see about it".

Your friend,

G. E. W.

March 3, 1912

My dear Battell—

"All things come round to him who will but wait",—and I have been a long while in getting round to this little letter. You see I wanted to finish my chapter all in one tone; so I kept at it, and meanwhile I have been snowed up with letters; but yours is the tallest drift. They are all quite safe, and I will keep them and send them back to you. No; I don't think there is anything very salable here. Still editors are unaccountable in their judgments. To me there is a lack of orderly presentation in your thoughts,—that virtue of the French which we all so sorely need. Their sequence is that of a pussy willow—so to speak—they shoot out along the stem; or that of a flowering bush. Now the editor as a rule prefers another mode of blossoming. And I myself, so far as my sense of art goes, prefer a few perfectly clear and definite lines and nuclei, as it were,—something like a spray or a lily or two in a vase. I think you need to have more government in your thinking, if you mean it to be understood by others,—more arrangement. Your thought is impulsive in movement, and apt to be fringy,—I mean to fringe out. A writer should have a clearer, more muscular blow to his arm, and a greater concentration; for writing is an art, not the blind working of a mere instinct. I say this with reference to your "salability", about which you ask,—and also as a comment on your style. What you have sent me in print is much better written, with a view to it merely as expression.

The substance of what you write is another matter. You will not want any answer to that, but only a sort of response, I take it,—for the two are quite different. With most of your thoughts, and what seems the breeding of your mind, I of course being like you a New Englander, feel the fundamental sympathy that belongs to sympathetic natures of the same breed. Your instincts and desires are those that belong to most of us, who sprung from the old root here. It is only on some modern specialties of New England that I really am recalcitrant. You may as well know from the first that I am a "terrible heretic", and with Christian Science I have as much sympathy as I have with an iceberg. I am perfectly stale with prejudice, and moss-covered like the traditional Democrat. One thing I especially dislike about Christian Scientists is the attention they give to their bodies. The soul is the thing that most interests me. And as for death, the truth is that I don't think much about it. It doesn't interest me. Of course, like all men who have lived I have had my experiences of human sorrow in the death of those dear to me, and felt what all must feel; but, except for such times, in the normal course of my days I do not think about death. Neither does immortality much interest me. I am content to leave these things with the other conditions of the being into which I was born: those things are really all involved in the being born, and I leave them with the original mystery.

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I was amused by your question about "Why?" One day my nieces and nephew were picking out the characteristic phrase of each member of the family, and they agreed that mine was "Why?"—so you see my answer to your question. I was always curious as to "whys?" and there are a great many of them. The reason why all we New Englanders are apt to be so much interested in religious matters and elementary questions of being is because we have, as a rule, so little variety in our habitual intellectual life; the New England environment is a monotonous one, and we youths fill our minds on these questions because we have not also other interests. So it seems to me. And I think the sooner you get into a more varied sphere of expression and life, the more sides of your nature will come out. I found my first interests in art (which led up to my first book, the history of wood engraving) a great relief in that way; and also my interest in biography, always strong, and history in its succession of periods. I did the usual amateur science-reading, and was deeply interested momentarily; but high science is now to me much like higher mathematics,—something too far away. I am amazed to think how little I know of what is everyday life for me, like electricity and machines; I know no more of them than of cooking.

But I did work out of the original monotony of religious and metaphysical thought, which is the habitat of the Simon-pure New England mind, and it was a great enrichment of the interest of life, and perhaps it was then that I lost predominant interest in these questions, though of course, being so important as they are, I always take a little notice. But, if I were to counsel you, I should bid you seek some new and other fields of interest, for the more widely you know the capacity and course of human life in its phenomena, the wiser you will find yourself in these deeper matters that are under all. The unreality of the world may be increased thereby; but that doesn't matter. The state you describe was confessed to by Tennyson and Wordsworth as characterizing their boyhood, and is in its more normal form that stated so finely for his own age by Carlyle in the Phantasmagoria of *Sartor Resartus*. Life is full of such states, and all kinds of flashes. It is nothing unusual in the life of cerebration that most of us lead. Each soul has its own history, and we must be content to go on our course with willingness that it shall end as may please the gods we may believe in as the originators and governors.

It may be you will think I am terribly indifferent. But among the other things that don't interest me personally is the question of my fortunes,—I mean of the success of my life and generally what will become of me or my work. Of course I would like to have been useful,—but if it turns out not so, it will not much trouble me I hope. At least I seldom think about it. Perhaps this isn't the proper way to write to you,—but it is the truth. I think the wisest men—and often the greatest—have come to their powers of great service somewhat by accident and to the place they found themselves in; but one condition of their power in the end was that they had the habit of doing little things day by day, and always as well as they could, and so their greatness came on them almost unobserved. They didn't think about greatness, but they grew up to it. Of course there are other types. But what appeals to me the most is the type that goes on from day to day about the duties and tasks of the day, and doesn't care about the issues. It is in this way that death, and immortality and fortune seem to me on the whole "unconcerning things".

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Now you have my point of view. Each of us must live according to his own lights, however, and all things must "come to him new". I don't mind your belief in the clear vision of youth,—it doesn't disturb me in the least. You are lucky to have any vision at all. I think a great deal of what you say is just what I believe myself, with the differences that I have indicated. In your general thought you are in the prevalent modern current,—the emphasis on *life* or vital form, or *immediacy* in intuition, or *indifferency* in morals,—these are the marks of present movements, for better or worse. As to these I still hold my mind partially undecided,—there being no occasion to decide. But you will work on these germs in you according to your own experience and choices.

I am sending you the new editions of my three books. You need not read them—they are perhaps too much involved in the subjects of the essays to be useful to you,—except *The Torch*.

I can't tell you how much pleasure your friendliness in these letters, the personal feeling of confidingness and affection, have given me, and I shall hope always to retain it.

Yours,

G. E. W.

March 17, 1912
Beverly.

Dear Battell—

I have been in New York a couple of days this week, and am just back to my work, and I am rather dull-witted to write to so lively a person as you, as I didn't sleep well in New York. Your asking suggestions about the summer reminded me of my amusement when you inquired about my "place" and its gardening. I haven't any "place",—just an old house on a city corner, where the family live, my elder brothers and sister and I, and grass where there might be a garden. Economically I am not an important person—not at all; and you mustn't think me very important other ways, either,—I am just a plain writer, getting on as best he can, not so different probably from your father, except that I never got even so far as a family. What I most fear is that you may expect too much serviceableness in my advice to you,—I am not a very good adviser in a practical way, I guess; only I should discourage your trying the cattle-ships. I don't much believe in that way of going abroad.

You may feel the "repressing" influences of these years, but I am not very sorry for that. They may be years of life's discipline for you: discipline is apt to be "repressing", but it is only temporarily *de*-pressing, and gives back in vitality and vivacity and effectiveness of force what it takes away in free and useless discharges of vigour. You know that. And you know that lessons of restraint and reticence are really lessons of art: they do not imply inferior force or confined force, but only self-intelligent and governed force. I look on the sort of discipline, restraint and reticence that art consists in as merely the true gates of freedom; through them you pass from anomaly and chaos to ordered liberty.

These must be old words to you. Do you know what they truly mean? I don't want to advise you, and do it against my will, in a way. I think you need to cultivate a sort of training in your mind and thinking. You know impulses are things to be governed oftentimes, and one followed at the expense of another. It is the same with ideas. The dangers of an unregulated intellectual life are very analogous to the dangers of an unregulated emotional life. You must find the ideas that have some promise in them, the practical

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ends of the intellectual life, the leads of the best ones, the gateways and not the *culs-de-sac,*—and good government in the intellectual life is much rarer than in the emotional life, I think,—but it is not enough just to have ideas, they must be finally ideas worth having, and fruitful. Now, of course, all this sort of advice you have had before. I think you had better give less attention to the *wanderlust* either geographically or intellectually, and try for a clearer definition to yourself of your own ideas and their issues, and think whether they are really practicable.

All well brought up New England boys who are specially intellectual or sensitive want to save the world, but the ways of saving it resolve themselves into ways of serving it, and those are thousandfold, and will bear a lot of examination and thinking about. You may be pretty sure it will not be saved by a miracle; and if we can help about it at all, we are more likely to help with trained minds and disciplined hearts, by examination of facts and forethought for means and results than in any other way. The more you can get your powers to act in a truly artistic and scientific way, the greater value they will have, I think. You mustn't think that because I am a "heretic" I am an infidel, though I may be. I wasn't thinking at all of religion when I wrote. I meant that I am apt to differ from established opinions about anything, or to hold them with some vital difference.

Now I am going back to my book to work; sometimes we will talk, I hope, which will be much better. And you must forgive me if I don't satisfy you, and only stir you up or discourage you uselessly; and as for our being friends, I wouldn't think about it much,—that is a human thing,—just let it grow naturally,—and don't think about it.

Yours,

G. E. W.

(The second and final part of this correspondence will appear next month.)

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

Pulpit versus Players

London, December.

LAST month's End-Paper was devoted to Penny "Bloods" and Curious Sermons. This month we are again facing the Pulpit; but it is to listen to sterner voices upraised in a controversy almost as old as organized religion—a controversy whose echoes are still heard. The World, the Flesh, and the Devil have been always the three targets of the pulpiteers. When the Three could be found in One the fight was bound to become hotter and intenser. Verily it did. The Dark Trinity was believed to be united in the Theatre: the players were an "adulterous", "blasphemous", "Sabbath-breaking" lot of pagans—"caterpillers", so one title page described them. Hence the long struggle between Pulpit and Stage.

The literature of the struggle is considerable and, involving as it does some historic names, offers one of the most curious and fascinating bypaths of book-collecting. I have looked into about a hundred contributions to the theatrical war of ink; and of these at least half were made by clergymen, usually as sermons. But the Pulpit was, at times, divided against itself. There are some notable instances of clergymen preaching and writing in defence of the Theatre. As early as 1599 Dr. William Gager published his *Th' Overthrow of Stage-players,* which is a defence—not an attack, as the title seems to indicate—of the Theatre. But there was apparently a long interval before the Pulpit produced the next defender of plays. He was Dr. Adam Ferguson, whose *Morality of Stage Plays Seriously Considered* (1757) was a sturdy voice of protest in the terrific row which ensued over a famous play written by a clergyman (I shall later raise the curtain on this melodrama). At the beginning of the next century the Reverend James Plumptre braved his brethren with *Four Discourses on Subjects Relating to the Amusement of the Stage* (1809). Plumptre was an eccentric cleric who also wrote an essay to prove that *Hamlet* was written as a censure on Mary Queen of Scots. America provided the next lonely defender when there was "published by request" *An Address upon the Claims of the Drama, delivered . . . by the Reverend Dr. Bellows, of All Souls' Church, New York. Verbatim from the New York "Herald"* (1857). In 1875 the Reverend Robert B. Drummond issued his *The Theatre: Its bearings on Morals and Religion* (Edinburgh)—and this is the last printed clerical defence of the Stage I have come across, although doubtless there

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are others later. But these are the voices of the minority.

It would be impossible to say at what date the attacks on the Theatre began. As regards their appearance in print, the Reverend John Northbrooke's black-letter *Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra: A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine playes or Enterluds . . . are reproued, . . .* et cetera (1577) is the earliest I have met with.* Howbeit, the Church started the printed row. Hot upon the heels of the Bristol preacher Northbrooke came the Reverend Mr. Gosson in 1579, whose pretty example of a title is worth giving in full: *The Schoole of Abuse, containing a plesaunt inuective against poets, pipers, jesters, and such like caterpillers of a Commonwelth; setting up the flagge of defiance to their mischieuous exercise, and overthrowing their bulwarkes, by prophane writers, naturall reason, and common experience: a discourse as plesaunt for gentlemen as profitable for all that wyll follow vertue. By Stephen Gosson. Stud. Oxon. Printed at London for Thomas Woodcocke, 1579.*

Now Mr. Gosson as a poet and playwright was himself a "caterpiller" who, having determined to "follow vertue", proceeded to bite the tails of his former associates. But he was an unsuccessful author; and that doubtless accounts for the wormlike wriggle which ultimately led to two fat rectorships. There the matter might have ended and Gosson been forgotten, together with his pastorals and long-lost plays, had not his *Abuse* inspired replies from two far greater poets. These were *A Defence of poetry, music, & stage-plays* (1579) by Thomas Lodge and the *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595) by Sir Philip Sidney. The *Apologie* is the more important of the two: it was a crushing and timely retort in the cause of poetry; but admitted rather than refuted the charges against the players. The fact is that the Stage was certainly open to the criticism of the many men of learning of the time; these men were not to know that already Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the other Elizabethans were on the eve of removing the reproach in the most glorious way that literature has known. Meanwhile Gosson returned to the attack a second and a third time *vide* the *Ephemerides of Phialo* (1579) and *Plays confuted in five actions, proving that they are not to be suffered in a Christian Commonwealth* (1582). The controversy was well started.

Within the short space of ten years the creeping things had apparently become monsters, for William Rankins, in 1587, published a vicious little black-letter pamphlet entitled *A Mirrour of Monsters: wherein is plainely described the manifold vices, and spotted enormities, that are caused by the infectious sight of Playes; With the description of the subtle slights of Sathan, making them his instruments.* Mr. Rankins, too, was a convert—but this time the other way about; for whereas the Reverend Gosson, after writing plays and poems, had taken the path of virtue, his successor thus attacked the "spotted enormities" of the Theatre, and afterwards contributed a few spots of his own, in plays which also are lost. Moreover, during the time that Gosson's "caterpillers" were fattening into Rankins's monsters, Philip Stubbes, the Puritan pamphleteer, joined in the fray with his *Anatomie of Abuses: containing a discoverie or briefe summarie of such notable vices or imperfections, as now raigne in many countries,* et cetera (1583). This quickly went into several editions; and brought the redoubtable and Puritan-hating Thomas Nashe about his ears with the *Anatomie of Absurdi-*

* The Shakespeare's Society's reprint of 1843 was stated to be from "the earliest edition, about A.D. 1577". But the Huth Library Catalogue definitely gives the date as 1577.

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ties (1589). With these, the earliest and chief sixteenth-century items in the controversy, the curtain descends on the first act.

In the new century the contending parties soon came to grips when Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, obviously impressed by the growing opposition, set himself to write a vindication worthier than the cause of the Stage had yet inspired. The result was *An Apology for Actors* (1612), the first edition of which is very rare. This, of course, provoked the inevitable Puritan; and one J. Greene, after many tormentings of the flesh, produced the long and laboured *Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), in which players were treated as so many heathens and the Stage as a diabolical institution. The cut and thrust of the early encounter being resumed in the new century, it was evident that things would soon come to sharps. And needless to say, it was a Puritan who called for the trouble—and got it. He was William Prynne. Danger sounded in the savage snarl of his *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge . . . Wherein it is largely evidenced . . . that popular Stage-playes . . . are sinfull, heathenish, lewde ungodly Spectacles,* et cetera (1632). Some Puritan must be made an example of; and preferably the young barrister of Lincoln's Inn, who was too ready with his pen. So they made Star Chamber business of it. For supposed aspersions in the book on Charles I and his Queen the Chamber sentenced Prynne "to life imprisonment—to stand in the pillory—to have his ears cut off—to pay a fine of £5,000—to have his book burnt—to be put from the Bar—and to be degraded from his university".

The Long Parliament released Prynne and declared his sentence illegal in 1640. Seven years later the fruits of *Histrio-Mastix* are seen in two official publications—*An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament for the utter suppression and abolishing of all stage-playes. And interludes. With the penalties to be inflicted upon the actors and spectators* . . . (1647). The second ordinance conferred similar powers (for committing actors to "gaole") on the Lord Mayor and Justices of London. Probably the Puritans thought this was the end of the wicked players; but they were leaving nothing to chance. In 1653, while some country folk were playing the comedy *Mucedorus* at Witney the room in which they were performing collapsed and several people were killed. This was a weapon offered by Providence—and clutched by one John Rowe, a lecturer of Christ Church, Oxford, who promptly wrote his *Tragi-Comoedia* (1653) to show that this was a signal of Divine displeasure at the "growing Atheisme of the present age". Meanwhile, although officially suppressed, the Theatre was kept alive until the Restoration.

The close of the seventeenth century brought the second notable controversy—the great Collier affair. This beats every battle of ink in the Pulpit-versus-Players war; and is famous among controversies. After Jeremy Collier, the nonjuror, published in 1698 his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage,* the question almost resolves itself: who did *not* write for or against Jeremy? In Thorn-Drury's seventeenth-century collection, the Collier controversy was well represented; and it is interesting to note that the experienced collector considered the rarest of all answers to Collier to be the *Vindication of the Stage, With the Usefulness and Advantages of Dramatick Representations* (for J. Wilde, 1698). Collier's title was turned round by an anonymous pamphleteer who replied to the Churchman in *The Immorality of the English Pulpit as subjected to the Notice of the*

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English Stage, as the Immorality of the Stage is to that of the Pulpit (1698).

Your preacher loves to be read as well as heard. With the printing-presses becoming commoner and busier, the eighteenth century added enormously to the literature of the Pulpit-versus-Players struggle. The century also saw the third and fourth of the notable controversies. The third—or Law Controversy—started from a fifty-page work entitled *The absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment fully demonstrated* (1726) by the Reverend William Law. Promptly a Mr. Dennis retaliated with *The Stage defended* . . . (1726). A few more publications, and then came the obvious *Law Outlaw'd: or, a short reply to Mr. Law's long declamation against the Stage*. The author laid it on thick, as may be judged by quoting parts of the remainder of the title: *Wherein the wild rant, blind passion, and false reasoning of that piping hot Pharisee are made apparent to the meanest capacity. Together with an humble petition to the Governours of the Incurable Ward of Bethlehem to take pity on the poor distracted authors of the town, and not suffer 'em to terrify mankind at this rate* . . . (1726). Law's attack drew other critics or supporters; and eventually the trouble died down for another quarter of a century. Then it flared up again following the production in Edinburgh and London of the Reverend John Home's play *Douglas* (1756). As is evidenced by the literature, a play to many people at this time was like hell-fire; but for a clergyman to write a play and have it acted was hell-fire let loose. The flames ignited popular passion; and Home was fiercely assailed on all sides. Mr. Anon was quickly on the scene with *An Argument to prove that the tragedy of Douglas ought to be publicly burnt by the hands of the hangman* (Edin. 1757). But this was mild compared with H. I.'s *The players scourge* (Edin. 1757), a most scurrilous attack on Home and his supporters who are accused of profanity, conniving at adultery, drinking, et cetera. *The Stage the High Road to Hell* was the title of a pamphlet of 1767, as it was the burden of all the pulpiteers' outpourings. Nevertheless, the supporters of the Theatre fought back, sometimes introducing a little grim or crude humour into the controversy. For example, the last-named pamphlet was at once followed by *Another High Road to Hell: An essay on the pernicious nature and destructive effects of the modern entertainments from the pulpit* . . . (1767). The worthy bibliographer Lowe considers that the rarest item of the *Douglas* controversy is the satire on Home—*The Seven Champions of the Stage: in imitation of Gill Morice* (Edin., 1757).

In 1746 appeared *A Serious address to the frequenters of play-houses*; and an unknown writer in 1756 was actually optimistic enough to try to defeat the Theatre by turning the female sex against it. His *Address to the Ladies on the Indecency of Appearing at Immodest Plays* has several points of interest. As affecting the long controversy, the chief is that in apportioning the degree of "criminality" for the bad state of the Stage, the author places the poet first; "the manager is entitled to a second share of guilt; while the player, it is confessed, is the last and least in the scandalous combination". This author's pamphlet was prompted by the crowds, with their large proportion of women, drawn to John Fletcher's *The Chances*.

The nineteenth century makes its fair share of contributions to the "record-run" controversy. But it is, on the whole, a less attractive share—either because the disputants are less important or because their writings are less curious. A few exceptions may be noted. Robert Mansell wrote *Free thoughts upon*

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Methodists, actors, and the influence of the Stage . . . (1814); and, carrying the argument into the other camp, represented the Saviour of the World as an approver of theatrical exhibitions. Dr. Timothy Dwight, one-time President of Yale College, contributed *An Essay on the Stage*, which was published in London in 1824, although originally printed at Middletown, Connecticut. And finally, a Scotsman had the impudence to write a vehement attack called *Theatrical Amusements!!!* (1821); and to adopt on his title-page a motto from Shakespeare.

It is not until the end of the century that we come to the fifth, and last, notable controversy in my classification: or what may be described as Clement Scott's Great Thought. Scott gave an interview to Raymond Blathwayt, who represented the periodical *Great Thoughts*, in which he let fall a remark to the effect that the rule of life on the Stage was immoral. This was published on January 1, 1898; and there was a great row over it. But Clement Scott did not stand to his guns, and before the end of the year he had vacated the Chair of Criticism on the *Daily Telegraph*. Blathwayt reprinted the interview with the comments of notable people in *Does the Theatre make for Good?* Of course Bernard Shaw could not afford to be out of a scrimmage like this; and in some ways he went farther than the originator of the trouble. His views are represented to have been, *inter alia,* that no member of the theatrical profession ever dreamt of believing any statement made by another; that a tradesman would give credit to any professional man more confidently than to an actor of equal standing; that blacklegging was prevalent; and that owing to modern commercial developments the Stage was probably more corrupt than it had ever been. But even Mr. Shaw's shrewd criticism is a little out of date now. Just as there were earlier changes in the Theatre, so there have been changes since the end of the last century. But it has never lacked its opponents; and it never will while it is conducted to please the majority of people, and—in so doing—offends the minority. Johnson's *Prologue*, spoken by Garrick at the opening of the Drury Lane in 1747, included the lines—

> Ah! let no Censure term our Fate our Choice,
> The Stage but echoes back the publick Voice.
> The Drama's Law, the Drama's Patrons give;
> For we that live to please, must please to live.

That is the Theatre's most effective retort: indeed, the only true one. It explains just why the wicked and heathenish Stage (with its "caterpillers" and monsters) has not been overthrown for all the three hundred and fifty years of maledictions from Puritans and Pulpiteers. But what fascinating scope for the book-collector is afforded by these centuries of printed theatricals and puritanicals!

LORD LOTHIAN'S LIBRARY

There was a great outcry in the British Press when it became known that the Marquess of Lothian's remarkable collection of early books and manuscripts was to be sent to New York to be sold by the American Art Association—Anderson Galleries. The critics protested against this blow at one of the oldest British trades (the fact that Lord Lothian is a member of the National Government being an added cause of irritation) and his assumption that he would realize better prices in New York (it being maintained that London is the best book-market in the world; and the natural one). It is unfortunate that the international deflations and slumps may make it difficult to make this a test case in the matter of prices. There is one contention of the

(*Continued on page ix, rear advertising section.*)

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THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

ERIK AXEL KARLFELDT, 1864-1931

by Charles Wharton Stork

When the Swedish poet Erik Axel Karlfeldt died last spring his name was practically unknown to the literary world in general. And yet few contemporaries in the western world could rival him either as to the matter or the manner of his achievement. In his own country, a land notoriously critical in its judgment, he had long held a foremost place, and the fact that he was not better known beyond its borders bears witness not to the inferiority of his art but to the strength of his character. When he was unanimously chosen to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature ten years ago he declined on the grounds that to the outside world the award of his *confrères* in the Swedish Academy might seem partial. Two Swedes, Selma Lagerlöf and Verner von Heidenstam, had already been given the prize, and for another to be added would seem out of proportion. He was right; it would have seemed so. Yet the Nobel Committee probably was right also; there was no one available who better deserved the honour.

The posthumous award of the prize to Karlfeldt rights the account, but he has still the distinction of being the only writer who has refused it. Others coquetted before accepting but he alone persisted in his resolution to decline. The act was characteristic of the man. He renounced not only forty thousand dollars but the deserved publicity which would have been given to his work. His countrymen understood and applauded, so his reputation at home did not suffer; nevertheless the sacrifice was great. What poet would not be tempted by international publicity of such an unimpeachable sort? We must accredit Karlfeldt with a delicate sense of honour and an unusual share of self-restraint.

It is left to posterity to do justice to the man who was unwilling to come forward on his own behalf. What kind of poetry did this man write? Honour and self-restraint may seem—especially in these days—rather negative than positive virtues in an artist. We like the poet to "let go", as Whitman said and did. It is a safe guess for anyone to assume that Karlfeldt is not modern in the usual sense of the word. In point of fact the question of time has almost nothing to do with his work. So far as style is concerned he might be a Greek of the time of Theocritus or a Frenchman of the early nineteenth century. Among English poets he has most affiliation with Landor, Arnold, and George Meredith's nature pieces.

But if time with Karlfeldt is irrelevant, place is all-relevant. He is a Dalecarlian at every moment and in every mood. This means that he comes from the peasant district of Sweden which is most strongly individual and most tenacious of its traditions. Selma Lagerlöf has pictured its people in her novel *Jerusalem*. It was these downright freedom-loving men who rallied about Gustaf Vasa and put him on the throne. In

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Dalecarlia ancient customs are respected and ancient costumes preserved. Lying inland to the north of Stockholm on the edge of the mountains it is a region of woods, lakes and swift rivers. The landscape is dark and serious but not forbidding. We know something of both the place and its peasant types in the paintings of Anders Zorn. Material prosperity of recent years, especially in connection with timber and mining industries, has enabled sons of the old stock to go to the university and get the best of educations. One of these sons was the poet we are describing.

Karlfeldt is never querulous in his poetry. He finds in our mortal pilgrimage "a hard, endless battle-drive" but insists, notwithstanding, that "life should be praised to the very last day". His own career was normal and uneventful. A happy man has no history. Gifted with good health, intellectual talent, and a free choice as to his profession, he worked slowly but steadily on to the highest position in the gift of Swedish letters. He studied at the University of Uppsala for a number of years, teaching in between, and in 1903 became a librarian. His first collection of lyrics, *Songs of Love and the Wilderness* (1895), appeared when he was thirty-one. The two volumes of Fridolin poems, on which his fame still very largely rests, followed in 1898 and 1901. He was made an Academician in 1904 and secretary of the Academy in 1912, serving on the Nobel Prize Committee since 1907. Three more volumes of poems and some critical work completed the total of his literary output. He married late, his wife being nearly twenty years his junior. Nothing very intriguing here for the future biographer.

Mr. V. Stefansson, the polar explorer, once remarked in the course of a lecture that an adventure was the sign of bad calculations. This is at least a point of view, as against the now popular maxim of "live dangerously". There are plenty of instances where a poet has attained high, even the highest distinction, without theatricality, without any of that lack of balance which the psychopathic school of critics thinks a necessary part of genius. Is Karlfeldt another case in point here or is his verse merely the product of skill and industry?

Let us attempt to review the evidence. Karlfeldt's verse deals almost entirely with the landscape and peasant life of Dalecarlia, presenting that life objectively in very definite and colourful pictures. The handling is always firm, but this should imply neither hardness nor coldness. On the contrary Karlfeldt's feeling is often extremely delicate and illusive, touched with human tenderness and with the legendary mystery of nature. He is a classicist dealing with the material of Burns, he combines freshness and directness with a sculpturesque precision of style. Take a stanza from *Imagined Happiness*, a love poem in his first volume:

You dwell in a splendour of light,
  You float as on music of strings,
But you love the sigh of the wood's deep night
  And the song that the wild thicket sings.
From empty display that o'erpowers,
  From pleasures that cloy without cease,
You long for the grasses, the flowers,
  For silence, oblivion, and peace.

The charm of Burns is suggested here, but it comes through a more developed mentality in a more accurate picture, more accurate not in the direction of greater artificiality but in that of finer perception.

Nothing in Karlfeldt is more original than his suggestions of pagan nature worship. There is an eerie fascination as well as intense beauty in his *Hymn to the Harvest Moon*:

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You come and the dew exhales to meet you,
The sap floods up into plant and tree,
The bosoms of women entreat you,
Your might's in the swelling sea.

You rule the soul; there is none that seeks not
To follow you all your journey long,
Each breast that loves and speaks not
Is brimmed with a flood of song.

The anxious farmer your orb is watching,
As nightly you guard o'er his ripening grain;
Your red means a storm approaching,
Your paleness foretelleth rain.

Now a herald-like voice at the midnight hour
Seems to cry: "He's coming, prepare ye his feast!"
He, a god of transcendent power,
And I, his worshipping priest.

Methinks in ancestral ages I'm dwelling,
When in days of the legended long ago,
Men prayed to the awe-compelling
Dream powers in the moon's soft glow.

I know of nothing quite like this. There is Greek earthiness in it, a firm command of imagery, and a lyric felicity which, it is to be hoped, has not been entirely lost in translation. Such a poem would, one fancies, have rather scandalized Wordsworth, but it would have delighted Thomas Hardy.

Imagination may be of the earth as well as of the ether; it is not a sign of lesser genius when based on observed fact than when it is wrought of airy nothings. Professor Lowes's book on Coleridge has shown that the supreme quality of *The Ancient Mariner* is largely derived from descriptions of first-hand experience by explorers, adventurers and naturalists. Such is the case with Karlfeldt; there is an inspiring authenticity in everything he treats.

In his third volume, *Fridolin's Pleasure-House,* Karlfeldt has a group of especially characteristic pieces, *Dalecarlian Frescoes.* In these he interprets Biblical scenes as done by native artists on the walls of inns and houses. The conceptions of the painters are very diverting, as of course they have to interpret their subjects in terms of their own surroundings. Karlfeldt in one of his poems displays Elijah carried up to heaven in a fresh-painted cart with a green umbrella between his knees. In the background is a local landscape with the onion-shaped steeple of Leksand church and a "red-and-yellow garden bed" of women standing by Siljan lake. To anyone who has seen the church and the bright native costumes the visualization is perfect. Another piece gives a lovely picture of the Virgin Mary personified as a Dalecarlian peasant girl. This blending of homely humour and homely sentiment is an accurate epitome of the local temperament.

The central mood of Karlfeldt's genius is, one might say, one of piety in the Roman sense of the word, *i.e.,* of reverence for the traditions of his ancestors. It appears notably in *My Forefathers* with its ending—

And should any poems of mine recall
The surge of the storm, the cataract's fall,
Some thought with a manly ring,
A lark's note, the woodland of the heath somehow,
Or the sigh of the woodland vast—
You sang in silence through ages past
That song by your cart and your plough.

It may seem curious that with his thorough understanding of the peasant temperament this poet never uses that native form of popular expression, the folk-song. He is fond of rather elaborate stanzaic measures, probably suggested by such French masters as Hugo and Gautier. The nearest he comes to letting his people voice their own emotions is in his famous *Dalecarlian March,* where a troop of labourers return from their summer toil. It begins:

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March to Tuna Town, lads,
O'er heath and hillside brown, lads,
March to Mora, lying
Amid the mountains blue!
While pick and spade we carry,
We haste and never tarry
To where great woods are sighing
And little sweethearts too.

But for all its vigorous swing the scheme is a bit too complex for a folk-measure. Karlfeldt renders the scene in his own language.

It will naturally be asked whether the poet never reveals anything of his own personality apart from his attitude as a communal spokesman. He seldom does; in the main he sinks his individual emotion in the tribal. He himself is the typical figure, Fridolin, who

Can talk in the peasant style with a churl
And in Latin with men of degree.

But in his later volumes he does sometimes drift into moods that are entirely his own. Despite the daylight directness of his usual style, he has a peculiar fondness for moonlight, for letting his soul float away in the pensive dusk of dream. Nothing is more typical here than the lyric *Sub Luna* from his last book, *The Horn of Autumn,* published in 1927:

Sub luna amo.
Dark is my bride:
She flames in the brown twilight,
she dances in moon-veiled pride.
Scented like jasmine
when summer lightnings glimmer,
She is cool as the dew of morning,
she shifts from brighter to dimmer.

Sub luna bibo.
Dark is my brew:
Black is the malt of its body,
its foam of moon-pollen hue.
Reverie and laughter
flit round the tankard I hold,
Hover like bats above it,
hover like blossoms of gold.

Sub luna canto.
Dark is my song:
It sighs like ripple-stirred rushes,
it rolls like the billow strong,
Rises defiant,
sinks back with a dull refrain,
Now at the flood, now ebbing,
old yet with youth's wild pain.

Sub luna vivo.
Dark is my life:
Common and trivial the round is,
pleasure and sorrow at strife.
Fain of my share in
this transient earthly state,
I can enjoy and suffer
The full brunt of human fate.

Sub luna morior.
Dark is my grave:
Give me to a nameless mound
or to the wind and wave.
Rest under sod, or
as rarefied dust on high
To flutter as erst my longing
yearned toward the moon-pure sky.

Enough examples have been given to show the character of Karlfeldt's style. He has, as we noted, a classical strictness of form; in his ten thousand-odd strophes all are regular in metre and nearly all are rhymed; and his phrasing is compressed, his diction precise. Yet as one reads him a second and third time the impression of his powerful and direct inspiration grows. The clean chiseling of his art overcomes the "resisting mass", as Gautier put it, so that we enjoy not only the skill of the workmanship but the thrill of the original impulse. If such poetry does not often sweep us away Byronically in the first rush of contact, it delights us far more on fuller acquaintance. Unheeding the idiom of the hour it follows a medium which, with the older masters, has stood the test of time.

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

COMEDIES, SATIRICAL AND SWEET

by Francis Fergusson

THE line "Of thee I sing, Ba-by . . ." from the theme-song of the musical comedy *Of Thee I Sing,* will do as the theme of a great many things, including this month's theatre chronicle. The very best thing about that show is that it manages to epitomize so many things in our national life. Its informal story, as everyone knows by now, is that of a presidential campaign, "Wintergreen for President", on a platform of Love. This platform was the invention of the national committee of one of our great parties. In the second scene of the first act we see the committeemen in their hotel room, chewing their cigars, drinking their bootleg, and racking their brains for an "issue". They finally decide to ask the chambermaid, as a representative American, what she likes best in the world, and she replies "Money". Money they reject as an issue because it is too dangerous—there are two sides to every money question; but her second choice is "Love"; and Love they make the one plank in their platform. Wintergreen being a bachelor, they organize a beauty contest in Atlantic City to choose Miss President. But Wintergreen falls in love with the wrong girl, he will have nothing to do with the winner of the contest, and that rejected beauty plagues the new President and his party for the rest of the evening through a series of the wittiest complications on Broadway. There are enough brilliant ideas in this show to make a dozen delicious comedies, but it all ends very happily when Mrs. Wintergreen has twins.

National Politics is the most promising possible subject for an American extravaganza. We are all prepared to accept it at once as almost mythically absurd, and it provides a framework for a satire of all the current manias: big business, sport, the sanctity of the home, the radio, advertising, and so on. Mr. Kaufman, Mr. Ryskind and the Gershwins have discovered that it is possible to make all our national idols look silly by the simple device of mixing them up: the theme-song itself is an example; or take the scene where Mrs. Wintergreen announces to the Senate that she is expecting a child, and the Senators, producing tambourines from under their frock coats, respond with a hymn of praise in the manner of the Salvation Army, while Mrs. Wintergreen herself, forgetting the wee one on the way, hitches up her skirt and breaks into a sort of ballet hula-hula. Mr. Kaufman has come far since his last year's success, *Once in a Lifetime.* That was an amusing comedy, until the last act; but *Of Thee I Sing* has some of the spirit, though not the form, of farce in the grand manner. Most of what we call farce nowadays comes to us as nonsensical interludes in a saccharine leg-show, and we forget that farce at its high points (like *Bartholomew Fair*) has managed to convey a picture of humanity from an absurd angle, but with its own consistency, its own laws and its own

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truth. The spirit of *Of Thee I Sing* is consistent and has its own truth. We do not really expect the Senate to begin waving tambourines; but we delightedly accept that scene with the obscure conviction that it reveals an important truth about the Senate, the Americans, and the Salvation Army.

For all its wealth of invention and singleness of intent, this is an extremely uneven show, for the reason that it lacks a consistent *form*. The authors started with the musical comedy, but they wanted to create effects that the musical comedy in this country has never achieved; they wanted the love-story to be part of the same vision as the funny-men, and they apparently wanted the stage business and the music to work together with comic effect—they were seeking, in a word (whether they knew it in these terms or not), a more supple and at the same time more consistent form than musical comedy. They tried to get help from Gilbert and Sullivan; they set the Supreme Court to aping the Peers of the British Nation. I think they were right to look for models, as it is becoming more and more evident that our writers of musical comedy will never develop that species into anything very interesting until they do find ways to utilize the experience of the past. But if they only knew about seventeenth-century farce—which is so much richer than even the brightest Victorians, so much nearer, in many ways, to the best in our own sense of the comic!

Miss Lois Moran makes a charming Mrs. Wintergreen, and Mr. William Gaxton and Mr. Victor Moore, as President and Vice-President respectively, are admirably within the allusive spirit of the writing. Mr. Gaxton manages to enrich a musical-comedy personality with overtones of Jimmie Walker, and Mr. Moore succeeds in suggesting, at the same time, something of the Cal Coolidge back-country sourness and something of the Herb Hoover appealing fat babyhood. The politicians are well played, especially by Mr. Sam Mann and Mr. Harold Moffet, and there is some good dancing by Mr. Murphy and Miss O'Dea.

The Animal Kingdom

Mr. Philip Barry has the one indispensable qualification for the playwright and the advertising man, an understanding of his audience. Mr. Barry's audience is a certain class of bright, well-intentioned, well-off young Americans, and his well-dressed subject is their spiritual life. "Can the sanctity of marriage stand an affair on the side?" Mr. Barry and his young people ask themselves in *Paris Bound;* "How about parenthood?" they wonder in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*; and now, in the *Animal Kingdom*, we find them weighing the Creative Life against Social Position. Not that Mr. Barry and his set ever blurt out questions such as these; they have too much prep school reserve for that—and besides, they are too sensibly committed to tea-gowns, cocktails, and the apparatus of comfortable living. They keep their misgivings hovering shyly and charmingly in the background, where Mr. Barry skilfully shows them to us without resorting to the crudity of explicitness. It is all the easier for him to do this, as the questions and misgivings are always the very ones that have been puckering the pretty brows of his flattered audience this season.

In *The Animal Kingdom* he shows us Tom Collier, a well-born young man, wavering between Daisy, a liver of the Creative Life, and Cecelia, his wife, who means Social Position. Daisy is a painter who was Tom's mistress before his marriage, and we are asked to accept her as a wise, true, loyal woman and free spirit. As played by Miss Frances Fuller

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she comes out as bright and chirping, likable in the "good sport" way. Cecelia we are supposed to think of as a siren who ensnares Tom with her physical charms; but as played by Miss Lora Baxter it is hard to see how she lured a man of Tom's alleged penetration. Tom finally decides that it is really Daisy who is his wife, spiritually, and Cecelia who is spiritually his kept woman, and he returns to Daisy. We are supposed to give Tom credit for great struggles, great changes: the crash of an illusion, remorse, the dawn of faith. Else what is the play all about? None of this is realized, it is implied, mostly in Tom's relation to Red, his prize-fighting butler. Red and Tom have one of those embarrassed, speechless masculine attachments which are so common in Mr. Barry's world, and it is Red who through his approval, his disapproval, his concern, who shows us what is going on in Tom. As for Tom himself, at the crisis, as played by Mr. Leslie Howard, he is charmingly thoughtful, worried; he quotes a line or two of verse and scowls mysteriously. Mr. Leslie Howard very lightly and pleasantly shows us a likable young man in a quandary, who then puts on his hat and coat and leaves all that behind forever.

In *The Animal Kingdom* the characters have to be taken on faith, as well as the problems, yet it is possible to go a long way with Mr. Barry; to give him credit for a sincere intention, especially when his actors help him out, as they did in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*. There are many who accept the deep, the stern significance he seems to wish this fable to have. But if you are "from Muhsourah" there will come a time when his extremely chic fairy-tale about young people with integrity will begin to annoy you, when you will wonder how it is possible to take a play seriously when it has no live people in it; how a set of paper-dolls from *Harper's Bazaar* can turn into Hedda Gablers in Act Two, and back to paper-dolls again in Act Three as though despairing, uprooting their lives, and leaving home were to be accomplished well-manneredly between luncheon and tea.

Springtime for Henry

The firm of Macgowan and Reed has produced three plays from England this season: *Lean Harvest,* a heavy drama about money; *The Lady with the Lamp,* a pallid chronicle about Florence Nightingale, with a beautiful pageant of forty years of English architecture and costume by Mr. Robert Edmond Jones; and the still current farce by Mr. Benn W. Levy. Its plot doesn't much matter: Mr. Dewlip (Leslie Banks) is having an affair with his friend's wife, Mrs. Jelliwell (Frieda Inescort). He hires a new stenographer, Miss Smith (Helen Chandler), who stops his affair with Mrs. Jelliwell and makes him cut out drinking and gambling. In due course Dewlip returns to his old ways and his old mistress, and Miss Smith is given Jelliwell as consolation prize. This summary does no sort of justice to the many clever if somewhat predictable surprises in the piece, nor to the bright, stagy situations which the actors carry off with such gusto, nor to Mr. Sircom's sprightly directing, nor, above all, to Mr. Levy's sense of humour. Mr. Levy's humour suggests at one and the same time Mr. A. A. Milne and Mr. Frederick Lonsdale. He is as smilingly quaint as the one, and as scandalously sophisticated as the other. He likes, with Messrs. Lonsdale and Coward, to permit his business Britishers their alcohol and sex; yet he and Mr. Milne know that they are really pixies after all—just so many dear little Alices-Through-the Looking-Glass under their plus-fours.

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Retrospect

Mr. Lawrence Langner's group, The New York Repertory Company, has produced Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* and Dion Boucicault's *The Streets of New York*. They were not very successful with the Ibsen, for they wavered uncertainly between taking Ibsen seriously as a social theorizer, and burlesquing his whiskers, his tail coats, and the rest of his Victorianisms. Both of these approaches to Ibsen are wrong; for Ibsen's ideas have dated, while his characters are too alive to be successfully made fun of, even in old-fashioned clothes. What is left of him, besides his people, is the cruel thoroughness of his exposition, which is so solid and complete as to have, at its best, the enduring beauty of form. It is the form of the play which Miss Lenihan, the director, most completely missed.

Mr. Langner's company was far more at home with a burlesqued Boucicault. *The Streets of New York* is about the panic of 1837; the suffering unemployed; the wicked gamblers in stocks; and the well-born who are reduced to poverty. Mr. Knowles Entrikin, the director, was able to cast some of the parts almost perfectly. One couldn't ask for a better innocent girlie than Miss Dorothy Gish, who knows how to lower her eyelids with tender modesty, swoon with a tiny cry, and roll across the stage in her big skirt like a doll on wheels. Mr. Rollo Peters made a dashing yet pleasantly bewildered fop of the thirties and forties, and Mr. Moffat Johnston, with his black eyebrows and black coat, a blood-curdling Gideon Bloodgood. Mr. Romney Brent loves monkeyshines, and performed them to his heart's content as Badger, a tough who reforms. Mr. Frank Conlan is one of their best actors, and, as a deserving pauper, he managed to be convincing while he kept to the lightness of the burlesque mood. The production was hardly up to the acting, but it was adequate. There were some good songs and dances by Mr. Wren and Miss Shaler, and the audience —at least during the early performances— contained a perceptible sprinkling of comfortable old-guard New Yorkers who carried out the flavour of a more innocent and roomy town.

Reunion in Vienna

The Theatre Guild has presented another one of those Continental comedies of theirs, with their prime comedians, the Lunts. This one is by Mr. Robert E. Sherwood, and is the story of Elena, a beauty of imperial days in Vienna, now married to a psychoanalyst, Dr. Anton Krug; and of the Archduke Rudolph, who was her lover in the old time. The Archduke returns to Vienna for the celebration of Franz Joseph's birthday, and the question is, whether he shall have Elena again for a night. Dr. Krug, her husband, has been analyzing her ever since their marriage, to cure her of her attachment to the old régime, and especially to the Archduke. He takes the occasion of Rudolph's return to complete the cure; he broad-mindedly allows Elena and Rudolph to have their night; arranges to send Rudolph back over the border, and so resumes life with a mysteriously cured Elena. It is evident that this is a pretty flimsy playlet—even the loquacious liberality of the wise Herr Doktor (which is much too liberal for an old fogy like myself) fails to add much substance to the evening's entertainment. But it provides a perfect opportunity for the special skill of the Lunts. In the first act Lynn Fontanne is beautiful in a pale green gown; in the second act she and Mr. Lunt are given a chance to gallop with "infectious enjoyment" through one of those hearty flirtations which

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they have taught the Guild audience to expect, to adore, and at last to demand from them. For the Lunts, through long practice, have become each other's perfect foils; and now Lynn Fontanne can count with perfect sureness on her own humorous but slightly sad indulgence to offset her husband's boyish high spirits. The third act is weak; but the Lunts, with the aid of Mr. Henry Travers, an excellent comedian who plays Dr. Krug's father, manage to put it across to a vastly delighted audience.

The Good Fairy

Miss Helen Hayes, in Molnár's airy farce, is very charming. Molnár shows us Lu, a little girl in Budapest, a cinema usher, who is hopelessly romantic: she wants to do nothing but good—do good to everybody. But she can't decide (when the play opens) whether to marry a waiter, and so make him happy, or become the mistress of a millionaire, and with the millionaire's money do good in a bigger way. First she decides for the millionaire, who promises to make her husband rich. She has no husband, but she hunts through the telephone book, and finds the name of a certain lawyer Sporum; and to the lucky Sporum she announces next day that she will make him rich. Sporum, however (played perfectly by Walter Connolly) is a moralist, and that is why he is poor; he has a struggle with his conscience before he finally decides to accept the perjured gold, the "price of Lu's shame". He has made everything right with his conscience, and ordered luxuries for his house and office, when Lu comes back to announce that she has changed her mind and married the waiter after all. It seems she didn't love the millionaire. And all she can offer poor Sporum by way of consolation is an invitation to help her and the waiter start a restaurant. Only, Sporum must not expect to be paid. That is where Molnár's play rather cynically ended, until Mr. Gilbert Miller, the producer, had him invent a "lived-happy-ever-after" finale, which is presented as an epilogue. This epilogue adds nothing, but it fills out a rather short evening of what is still by far the best entertainment of its kind in town. That is because of Miss Hayes's delightful variety; Mr. Connolly's deeply humorous, fat fond old Sporum, and Mr. Paul MacGrath's quiet, amused head-waiter. It is also because Molnár can write a light comedy which is really light, really innocent of didacticism, prophecy and self-pity. In contrast with Mr. Behrman, for instance, Molnár seems to be able to count on his audience to be amused at what amuses him.

Cornelia Otis Skinner

Miss Skinner, like Miss Ruth Draper and Miss Angna Enters, has a theatre in which she does all the writing, acting, directing and designing. She has built up a group of contemporary sketches like Miss Draper's; and this year she adds historical portraits, the six wives of Henry the Eighth. At the performance I saw, her range, in the contemporary sketches, seemed to be bounded by the broad farce of *Sailing Time on the Olympic* at one extreme, and the well-constructed pathos of *In a Gondola* at the other. Miss Skinner has a good voice, and an excellent ear for the vocabularies and rhythms of different kinds of speech; it is the mimic's gift raised to a high power. Accurate mimicry, with a few shrewd observations on seeing friends off, is all she has to offer in sharp little trifles like *Sailing Time*; but in the sketch called *In a Gondola* she makes us feel very gradually the pathetic, absurd plight of a middle-aged, middle-Western couple taking the air under the romantic

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auspices of Venice and a full moon. She dominates such situations, and when her language stays in the key of ordinary speech it is more than adequate. When she tries for heavier drama, as in *Aftermath*, a picture of an unhappy marriage, she degenerates into banality both in acting and writing, and we find her repressing sobs like any Broadway tragedy queen. Her historical sketches, which are much more ambitious, invite invidious comparisons, yet they give her authentic gifts a wider scope. She has nothing like Miss Enters's sense of period, nor has she Miss Enters's sense of the dramatic values of costume. Also we are dismayed to hear one of Henry's wives ask herself whether Henry really "cares"—a phrase from cheap contemporary fiction. But Miss Skinner gets the Spanish voice and the music of Spanish for her Catherine of Aragon; the same thing in German for Anne of Cleves, and a bright though superficial characterization of Catherine Howard. Miss Skinner, it seems, is not yet sure of her effects, but she is one of those who may be building the monologue into a supple theatre form.

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THE NEW BOOKS

MODERN CONTINENTAL PLAYWRIGHTS *by Frank W. Chandler* (HARPERS. $3.00)

IF MEN of learning, by their endless concern over trifles, often awaken something between amusement and contempt in their big brethren of the world, they sometimes awaken amazement, too, at the magnitude of their undertakings. This is a book to amaze. In 711 pages we are given a survey of the drama of continental Europe during the half-century from 1880 to 1930. Nearly one hundred pages are devoted to a closely printed Bibliography. The present reviewer entertained, as people will entertain foolish notions, some thought of counting the entries in this Bibliography. He thought he might thus contribute one interesting fact about recent European drama, as represented in Professor Chandler's volume, which its author had omitted. And so he might have—but he resigned the task to some more industrious student after counting the titles listed on just two representative pages, and discovering that they reached a total of 184. One cannot be surprised when Professor Chandler says that his list—the compilation of which in itself must have been a labour as time-consuming and as troublesome as the writing of some books—"is the most complete yet published"; yet he adds immediately that "it is selective rather than exhaustive".

It may be that this portentous Bibliography is what the author really has in mind when, in his Preface, he says: "On the continent of Europe since 1880 the drama has flourished as never before except during the Age of Pericles in Greece, of Elizabeth in England, and of the later Renaissance in Spain and France". In twenty-nine chapters he leads the reader through Ibsen, Strindberg, Björnson, Tolstoy, Gorky, Chekhov, Sologub, Andreyev, Lunacharsky, Scribe, Dumas *fils*, Sardou, Bernstein, Zola, Hervieu, Brieux, Claudel, Rostand, Rolland, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Schnitzler, Wedekind, Toller, McInár, Echegaray, Benevente, d'Annunzio, and the Futurists, with many pauses by the way to take due account of lesser figures, until finally the journey is concluded with Pirandello. No one could be better qualified to act as a guide to this vast territory than the author, who has read everything, apparently has at command all that he has read, and yet never for a moment allows his great learning to become a burden, either to himself or to his readers. And certainly the facts disclosed are extraordinary. If the drama flourishes when plays almost beyond number are written well-nigh everywhere in Europe, when things unattempted hitherto within the span of dramatic history succeed each other with great rapidity, so that every conceivable method of composition is at least tried, and when many indisputable "slices of life" are represented faithfully and completely, and the problems of the time are at least thoroughly ventilated, if not, alas, solved—if drama flourishes when we have a vast amount of restless stage-activity, and the greatest possible variety of it, and ceaseless effort to make it serve every purpose, from light amusement to serious moral teaching,

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political propaganda, or metaphysical vapourings—then, surely, it has flourished in Europe since 1880 as never before within our knowledge.

The sentence which has been quoted, it is true, would seem to mean something rather different—not that the drama has flourished through these years simply because there has been a great deal of it, but rather that some playwrights, at least, have reached heights of expression comparable to those reached in former ages when the drama became, for a space, the great and unique expression of the enduring spirit of man. And there may, indeed, be some inconsistency here. The text of the book, at any rate, gives no real support to such a claim. Professor Chandler, like others who have received their training at Columbia University, usually tends to think first of stage values and of technical problems when he is discussing plays; and, of course, a vast wealth of matter, of the very greatest interest from this point of view, is afforded by the work of the last half-century. Professor Chandler is, however, by no means blind to human values, as his chapters make abundantly clear. He knows quite well that he has to do with a considerable number of dull boys in this book—though he himself gives his readers scarcely a single dull page. He knows that the newest methods of representation are often mere tricks, when they are not stupid efforts to attain the inherently unattainable. He knows that many even of the most famous men of his period have been dealing with problems beyond their grasp, and in a spirit of stubborn self-will, not seldom combined with invincible self-righteousness. He knows that some of his playwrights, too many of them, are half-crazed children of the gutter, brutal, vulgar, ignorant, and unscrupulous. He knows, also, that it is very easy for some men to persuade themselves that they are not getting their due from society, but that neither the spirit of self-pity nor the spirit of covetousness ever has produced or ever will produce great literature or art. And in fact one gets from this book, taking it as a whole, the positive, unmistakable, and correct impression that European drama during the last half-century has floundered helplessly in a maze of confused ideas and aims, with the consequence that despite all effort nothing of the highest worth has been written, and comparatively little of permanent or marked significance, save as an index of the time.

One receives this impression because the author's method brings out the facts themselves, and constantly focuses attention upon them. Professor Chandler, as he says, "has not been content merely to name" vast numbers of plays, or to "refer to them vaguely in general terms, as is so commonly the practice in histories of literature". On the contrary, "he has assumed that it is the reader's desire to be informed as to just what the more important dramas are all about", and accordingly he has analyzed play after play, some hundreds of them, so that the volume is predominantly a repertory of plots. Running comment, bridging the passage from one analysis to another and from one playwright to another, makes the book, at the same time, something more. This, however, while it gives the reader much in the way of needed interpretation, often happily phrased, is not the most satisfactory part of the work. The lesson, doubtless, is merely the trite one that a man cannot reasonably expect to do everything simultaneously and equally well. And to inspect closely some of the author's critical observations would be to do both him and his book an injustice, because these observations are merely incidental to a large undertaking which should be regarded and judged

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as a whole, and which, when so considered, is seen to be excellent in plan and execution.

Modern Continental Playwrights is, indeed, a capital guide, and a great storehouse of matter for discussion and criticism, which is not likely soon to have a serious rival. It appears as one of a series, the *Plays and Playwrights Series*, edited by Professor A. H. Quinn. The volumes hitherto published in this series, it must be said, have not been such as to make it a particularly successful undertaking, the need for most of them being quite doubtful. This latest addition, however, is a different matter. It fills a real need, and fills it admirably, and Professor Chandler deserves the gratitude of all those many learners, young and old, in school and out of school, who find in the drama an endlessly interesting and rewarding subject of study.

ROBERT SHAFER

THE GOLDEN THREAD *by Philo M. Buck, Jr.* (MACMILLAN. $4.00)

THE secondary title explains *The Golden Thread* as *Being the Romance of Tradition in Literature.* Doubtless with the romance in mind the publishers have provided attractive decorations; and the author has devised such chapter headings as *The Two Eternities, The Mystery of Tears,* and *Bright Phoebus in His Strength.* The book begins with Homer and ends with Tolstoy. On these grounds one might assume it to be an attempt at yet another Outline.

But the author's emphasis is less on the romance than on the tradition. In his final summing up he is even so far from romance that he says, "This great tradition, this thread of gold that makes a single pattern of the past and the present, may well be called humanism, that essence of urbanity and reason, as Sainte-Beuve calls it, that sees human nature in its largest and richest aspects, and would assign to each of the human faculties its rightful place. It is the question of the good life and a practical philosophy. From the days of Homer to Goethe these poets of a purged humanity have demanded that the human life if it be well lived shall reveal a reasonable motive. . . . All these men have studied life, and brought to its examination the standard of human reason".

The consequence of Mr. Buck's emphasis on this "practical philosophy" in the great poets is that the romantic reader will find much less to his taste than will the classicist. Homer and the Greek dramatists, Mr. Buck is careful to show once more, preserved a purely human perspective in contrast to the often grotesque supernaturalism of the Orient. He is not deluded into thinking that the tragic poet denied human freedom or responsibility because he made use of legends of fate. In such matters he shows understanding of fundamental distinctions.

Again, in dealing with so tentative a writer as Montaigne Mr. Buck notes tendencies in the *Essays* that might lead some to call him a precursor of Rousseau, but correctly points out the cool realism, the worldly wisdom, the disillusionment, and at the same time the noble search for the good life. "To be reasonable is to be objective, to study human nature to know the attainable, and to content oneself within its limits." For Montaigne, reason is our only guide in a world of uncertainties. And against the usual assumption of Montaigne's egotism, which might unthinkingly be compared to Rousseau's, Mr. Buck writes: "Montaigne is modest, for he sees the pitiful discrepancy between the world man possesses and the world beyond to which he has no key; Montaigne is ironical for he sees that few content themselves thus with the attainable, but must continue

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to act as though they were rightful claimants of the throne".

The author properly makes no claims to novelty, but he succeeds in writing a chapter on Shakespeare which avoids the hackneyed and emphasizes an aspect seldom stressed—his irony. Perhaps he makes too much of it, but at all events he induces reflection. "The irony is the inadequacy of even the best foresight, and the irrelevance or downright malignity of fate that uncovers human situations. . . . It is not as in Greek tragedy where some manifest flaw, like passion, suddenly drives them to an end unforeseen, but nature and reason itself become hangmen over night. The relativity of reason, the human significance of morals, the compensating greatness of personality, these are the things that Shakespeare discovers."

A limitation of Mr. Buck's book is its failure to be written always in a style worthy of its theme. The author succeeds well in conveying his enthusiasm, but he sometimes falls into easy facetiousness and incongruous metaphors; he has not always resisted the pull of the undergraduate audience for whom the book was originally prepared as a series of lectures. Another weakness of the book resides in the very scheme, which must necessarily disappoint many because of its omissions, and which is so comprehensive as necessarily to uncover the limitations of the author's learning in the eyes of specialists at some points. Anyone essaying a survey such as Mr. Buck attempts runs the risk of developing a lust for fat generalizations, and the factual scholar here serves the useful function of bringing him up short. But the factual scholar is likely to succumb to the lust for facts as facts; and we may rejoice that Mr. Buck shows in contrast a passion for the humane significance of literature.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

THREE PLAYS *by Charles Williams* (OXFORD. $2.25)

THE ascension of the human spirit from malignant hate to all-embracing love is advanced as the key to these dramatic essays called (for convenience) plays. They are interspersed with ballads in the mediaeval manner intended for allegorical sign-posts along the road.

In these songs of "Camelot, Lutetia, Ravenna, Alexandria, Byzantion", and in the beautifully varied and singing measures of *The Rite of the Passion*, Mr. Williams shows at his best, for he is a poet of parts and here enriches his poetry with names of everlasting glamour and with mystic symbols which everyone understands.

The plays, *The Witch* and *The Chaste Wanton* on the other hand, are failures. There is no pulse in Mr. Williams's blank verse; his verbal magic forsakes him, his diction is obscure and his thought agonizingly compressed. But what is more important, he shows almost no sense of character, and even less dramatic invention or plausibility. *The Witch* presents malevolence walking the earth in the shape of an old cottager and her brood. The witch talks like this:

> . . . a thing goes wandering o'er the earth
> you cannot see, a thing that dark or day
> are all alike to, burrowing through all walls,
> that is madness, that is sickness, that is hate,
> and is a marvellous thing beyond all these. . . .

The Chaste Wanton concerns a super-subtle duchess and a super-sensual alchemist who at length ask and answer the question "What is love?" It ends with the duchess signing the alchemist's death warrant and the reader's wondering what it is all about. The duchess talks like this:

> Only I look to something which is you,
> and know that ever, ever, evermore

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it could as soon put out my past in me
as in my mind be aught but the main prince,
epiphany and prescription of the end.

Mr. Williams should realize that the best verse play is handicapped by its form, and that poets should study stagecraft and learn to portray character in action like ordinary dramatists. At present he is a poet of parts with the dramatic part left out.

OLGA KATZIN

FANNY KEMBLE *by Dorothie Bobbé* (MINTON, BALCH. $5.00)

THERE is an anecdote about a Kentucky gentleman who saw Fanny Kemble in one of her great rôles. At the end of the play, completely carried away by the young actress, he spluttered out in his excitement a Kentuckian's tribute: "By Heavens, Adams! She's a horse. She's a horse". The Adams whom he addressed was ex-president John Quincy who enjoyed the performance no less although he expressed his admiration more elegantly.

And what a horse Fanny Kemble must have been to those who knew her—what a woman! Perhaps not a great actress, this daughter of the ruling Kemble-Siddons house of Great Britain, she was probably the greatest *person* of all that extraordinary family. And as a reader of Shakespeare in the classical tradition she was undoubtedly magnificent. One recalls, with a sense of pleasure over the fitness of things, that Horace Howard Furness, greatest of American Shakespearean scholars, was not only one of the devoted younger friends and admirers of her later days, but was directly inspired to his career by hearing her, night after night, read Shakespeare when he was a boy.

And what a horse, too, in her rigour of mind and in her intellectual attainments! Uncompromising in her attitude toward Negro slavery and toward women's emancipation, she was yet among the most clear-sighted of her day in dealing with these problems. She was no simple humanitarian or sentimentalist; she grappled with the fundamentals. The unhappy period of reconstruction after the Civil War was no worse than she had expected. She was convinced that with slavery the situation was a kind of vicious circle which had to be pierced, and that reconstruction, however painful a process, was an ordeal that the South must go through for the sins of preceding generations.

Mrs. Bobbé has written the first full-length life of Fanny Kemble, and has done a thorough and entertaining book. She has handled the years of married unhappiness with a fine sense for both truth in detail and good taste. She has quoted freely and with excellent discrimination from any number of sources, showing a long and painstaking preparation. Mrs. Bobbé has no thesis to present. She has been interested only in painting a sympathetic and revealing portrait of a great woman whose life almost spanned the nineteenth century, and in filling in the background. In this latter task she shows her familiarity with the spirit of the times every step of the way. The publishers have put out a volume worthy of the labours of its author. And those, in turn, are worthy of the splendid woman who is their subject.

FRED T. MARSH

THE SIBYL OF THE NORTH *by Faith Compton Mackenzie* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.00)

CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN was not a great ruler, although she inherited from Gustavus Adolphus the good-will and confidence of her people, and although she had both the capacity and the education to fit her for govern-

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ment. She was not even a very good ruler, for the wisdom of the laws she enacted and her hearty championship of philosophy and learning were rather more than balanced in the end by the thoughtless extravagance of her reign. But one can say with small fear of exaggeration that she was one of the most baffling and enigmatic rulers who ever occupied a European throne.

In spite of the industry of her several biographers, she has remained an enigma, and it must be admitted that Faith Compton Mackenzie's study, notwithstanding its many excellences, does not bring us to a solution of the riddle. Mrs. Mackenzie has dealt very well and conscientiously with the facts of Queen Christina's career, and this in itself is no light task in view of the almost impenetrable fog of conjecture and scandal which surrounds them. She has told her story in an agreeable and colourful style which may be characterized as popular. But she has not succeeded in evoking from the mass of contradictory and doubtful material an understandable and credible figure of Christina, who governed her country vigorously for ten years, and who resigned her crown voluntarily before she was thirty, to wander about Europe with a miniature "court on wheels", leaving in her wake a trail of scandals and escapades, of major quarrels and abortive political plots.

Two important questions in particular Mrs. Mackenzie has failed to clarify, perhaps because they can never be clarified. What influence had the history of Christina's amours upon her troubled political career? And why, after she had made her supreme gesture—whether of renunciation or of pure theatricalism, one can scarcely say—and resigned her crown, should Christina have outraged her country still further by abandoning the faith for which her father had fought so valiantly, and espousing the Roman Catholic religion, only to remark while attending a comedy on the evening after her public conversion: "Gentlemen, it is most appropriate that you should entertain me with a comedy after the farce I played for you this morning"?

MARGARET WALLACE

THE ENGLISH MEDIAEVAL FEAST

by William Edward Mead (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

THE legendary prowess displayed by the mediaeval knight in love and war was surpassed, according to Mr. Mead, by his achievements at table. The feast was the great social function of English life in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and lords and gentlemen diverted themselves with banquets whose lavishness would stagger modern imaginations. When the occasion was a great one—the marriage of a nobleman or the installation of a bishop—the feast lasted for a week or more, and was attended by hundreds or even thousands of guests. The cost of such a celebration sometimes amounted to the equivalent of sixty thousand dollars in modern money.

The pre-Elizabethan menu, largely composed of meat, game, and fish, was varied according to the ingenuity of the cook. The object of mediaeval culinary art, apparently, was to render the main ingredient of a dish totally unrecognizable. Foods were indiscriminately chopped into fine bits, or ground into a paste with mortar and pestle; they were smothered in innumerable sauces, and spiced with cloves, cubebs, mace, saffron, ginger, licorice, anise, and coriander. Sugar, for some reason, was classed as a spice and used liberally, together with wine, vinegar, rose water, and milk of almonds, in the preparation of meat dishes. The semi-liquid state in which all dishes were brought to table

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is ascribed by Mr. Mead to the lack of forks, and to the fact that food had either to be taken with a spoon or scooped up with the hand.

As a general introduction to his study of the feast, Mr. Mead has sketched in the related circumstances of mediaeval life. He has worked chiefly from original sources, and the value and interest of the material he has unearthed, his descriptions of historic feasts and his transcriptions of mediaeval cookery recipes are unquestionable. His own interpolations are so laboured and repetitious, however, that the book as a whole makes rather difficult reading.

MARGARET WALLACE

THE DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI *translated by Jefferson Butler Fletcher* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

THAT anyone could studiously read this new translation of the *Divina Commedia* and not concur with Professor Grandgent's opinion that it supersedes all other English versions of Dante's poem is unthinkable. Not only is it more beautiful, as an English poem, than any other complete metrical translation, but it is also better able to stand a close comparison with the original. By avoiding the familiar mediums of blank verse, regular *terza rima* and unrhymed tercets, Mr. Fletcher has happily escaped the dangers of painful literalness, "cloying excess of rhymes", forced paraphrases and pedestrian flatness into which all his predecessors frequently fell. His use of rhymed but unlinked tercets (that is, a two-thirds rhymed version) provided him with a measure which best preserves the spirit of the Italian and at the same time saves the English from artificiality. Besides, his linking of the last two *terzine* in each canto sufficiently suggests that "union of continuity with pause, of unity with change" which constitutes the beauty of the form Dante invented.

Besides achieving the dramatic power which Dante has in his own Tuscan and of which he is invariably divested when rendered into another tongue, Mr. Fletcher has been most successful in catching that poetic lucidity which T. S. Eliot justly admires in Dante ("The thought may be obscure, but the word is lucid, or rather translucent"). Everywhere he has attempted, and in most cases successfully, to reproduce the exact images, to parallel Dante's literary devices and to preserve his conceits. Where Dante employs repetition with a studied incantatory effect, the translator follows him:

> E così chiusa chiusa mi rispose
> Nel modo che il seguente canto canta.
> *Par. V, 138-9*

> And then thus close enclosed to me replied
> In fashion such as my next song will sing.

When the poet begins six successive cantos with "Or conosce" or makes "Cristo" rhyme three times with itself, the translator wisely recognizes that this is part of the same scheme that set thirty-three cantos as the limit for each *cantica* and one hundred as the proper number for the whole vision and therefore to be respected. The verbs Dante so freely coined find an equivalent in the English: "enlilied" for *ingigliarsi* and

> Had *ringed* me with his gem as wedded wife,
> *Purg. V, 136*

for *innanellata*. Perhaps the greatest such feat is the rendering of Dante's complicated alliteration and his rich patterns of vowels:

> In forma dunque di candida rosa
> Mi si mostrava la milizia santa
> Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.
> *Par. XXXI, 1-3*

> So in the semblance of a pure white rose
> The sacred soldiery which in His blood

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Christ made His bride revealed itself:
but those——

For an excellent example of Mr. Fletcher's handling of all these difficulties one has only to turn first to the famous fifth canto of the *Inferno* and compare his rendering with that of any other translator: this is the first time that the episode of Francesca da Rimini has lived in English. The last tercet in particular is a masterpiece of the art of translating.

On every disputed passage Mr. Fletcher has accepted the most reasonably satisfactory interpretation from among the many offered by learned scholars. Altogether his version is the best that could be read either by those who have no access to the original or by those who wish to supplement their reading of the Italian with a faithful and beautiful translation. Most great poets never really pass the boundaries of their own linguistic domain; through that very simplicity of style which has repeatedly lured them on, Dante has for six centuries eluded his translators until now at last we have him in an adequate version.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

A DRYAD IN NANAIMO *by Audrey Alexandra Brown* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THIS is a strange little book of verse, a book composed for the most part of poems on traditional subjects written in the traditional manner; Miss Brown, a Canadian poet, knows every turn of phrase, every trick in the use of rhythm. She is much practised in the writing of English verse. And if this were all, it would not be enough. But there is the long narrative poem, even as Pelham Edgar in his introduction points out, and this poem, *Laodamia,* is something quite different. It tells the old story of how Laodamia waited for her husband's return, of how he came back to her finally, but from the dead and for a few hours only. And the story is told in the traditional poetic language. But the poem has a kind of passion that is unmistakable, feeling which is poignant, real, and as contemporary as if the poem were on a more contemporary theme. What happened in all probability (and here we guess) is that the poet used the old legend as an agent for her own emotions. The result is a story of love, beautifully told, of love that is intense and endless:

Here by the narrow casement-arch she stood,
Clear-visioned now; and slowly on her sight
Returned the golden laurels, and the light
Of a wild evening dashed with wine and blood.
Still was the room behind her, and she heard
Nor voice nor footstep; neither any shadow
stirred.

Nothing but green and gold before her lay,
About the painted wall, about the eaves,
No wind in all its multitude of leaves
That glistened with the fire of dying day
And dropped with lonely rain. A heavy pall
Of silence and of darkness slowly shrouded all.

And in that passive hush her heart awoke,
As wakes a frightened child, that in the dark
Stretches its groping hands and finds no spark
To help or comfort. All the world like smoke
Wavered before her seeing eyes, and passed
As with undreamed-of tears her spirit broke
at last.

All of the younger poets of Canada (so far as I have read their work) seem inclined toward the traditional subject and form; they are more deeply rooted in English literature, far, than are the young American poets. And this is both to their advantage and their disadvantage. But none of the other young Canadian poets within my limited reading has used this traditional subject matter, language, and verse pattern with more persuasiveness than does Miss Brown. It is easy enough to

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see influences in her poem, but these are not important; what is important is that the tragic tale is retold convincingly, beautifully.

EDA LOU WALTON

IMPERIAL BROTHER: THE LIFE OF THE DUC DE MORNY *by Maristan Chapman* (VIKING. $3.50)

BUILDER of Longchamps, founder of Deauville, the Duc de Morny must ever be associated with French love of diversion. The natural son of a natural son of Talleyrand, Morny's mere existence as a man of rank may be taken to illustrate Gallic leniency in sex preferences. Likewise, there was more than personal idiosyncrasy in the man's realistic comprehension of femininity and finance. His magnificent dwelling on the Champs Elysées was a "*petit coin d'amour*"; it was also a center for intrigue in material matters, such as exploitation of the Bourse, by one who regarded public office as a private privilege.

Auguste de Morny was born in a furnished room on the Rue Montmartre. His mother, Hortense, Queen of Holland, did not intend that he should enter the educated world. She was quietly thwarted in this ungenerous resolve by Adèle de Sousa, whose own son, Morny's father, had "vindicated" efforts to repair the unfairness of his birth.

The will to power appears early in Morny's life. He seems unaware of his handicaps. He chooses to regard them, in fact, as accidents placing him more or less above as well as apart from the average aristocrat. His juvenile association with the Orleans princes is an excellent school for arrogance in that it convinces him of his superior native gifts. Later, when he is endowed with a place and a courtesy title at Louis Philippe's court, then gazetted as lieutenant in the Lancers, he idles earnestly; but behind the idling there is appreciation of worldly values. Soon he is off to Africa, "to test his courage". He returns to Paris with medals for valour, and with a beet-sugar farm in Auvergne as his major practical concern. This sugar farm, the tangible result of a flirtation with Madame le Hon, a friend of his mother's, eventually gives him financial independence. It also provides a key to the gates of political life. Elected Deputy, he championed the growth of the beet-sugar industry in southern France, as against colonial cane sugar. Not wholly by accident, this issue became national in its scope and incidence. Morny's name reached the national consciousness. Carefully, persistently, a legend was developed: he became the prophet of a new economic order and prosperity.

Never wholly committed to personalities or programs other than his own, Morny soon provoked doubt among the Orleanists concerning his loyalty. Later, similar doubts were created in the mind of his half-brother, Louis Napoleon, whose cause he had embraced and vitally influenced.

It was this elusiveness, this habitual reticence about ultimate intentions, which gave him a curious kind of independent power. He resigned the post of Minister of the Interior, in order to forestall Napoleon's jealous demand for his resignation. He subsequently accepted the presidency of the Corps Legislatif and represented France at the coronation of Alexander the Second, both honours being evidence of Louis Napoleon's mingled respect and anxiety. Morny was a greater worry in retirement than in office, and notwithstanding his suspected *rapprochement* with the Orleanists. In 1859, during the Italian campaign, Morny was Regent of France. He may be credited with softening the effects of Villafranca. Upon Napoleon's return to Paris,

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Morny urged liberalism as protection against revolutionary danger to the throne. Eugénie and Persigny fought consistently for absolutism. They were successful in their fight; the Mexican imbroglio was proof of their victory. Not until disaster loomed did Napoleon turn to Morny with an open mind on conciliatory electoral and legislative measures. Then it was too late.

The present fictionized biography is rich in limpid prose. It is too rich, perhaps, in imaginative quality. Telepathy and ghosts, undocumented dialogue and analysis, tend to lower the historical value of the narrative.

ARMAND BURKE

THE RECKLESS DUKE *by Sir Philip Gibbs* (HARPERS. $4.00)

ONCE upon a time a good-looking, lighthearted, extremely shabby young gentleman named George Villiers became a hanger-on of the English Court, as did many another penniless and well-born youth. But this particular George was destined to win honours and riches as the Favourite, first of King James the First, and then of his son Charles, to become Marquis, and later Duke of Buckingham, to consort on equal terms with ambassadors and queens and princes, and presently to become virtual ruler of England. He was loved and hated, praised extravagantly, denounced no less extravagantly, and died at last by the knife of a fanatic. His story is so improbable that no fiction writer would dare invent it. Sir Philip Gibbs seems to have fallen somewhat under the spell of that charm which enthralled two men who were in most ways totally unlike, James the First and Charles the First. He traces most of his hero's faults to the recklessness which was his outstanding quality, praising him as courageous, generous, frank and honest. That Buckingham was also colossally vain, that he could not endure a word of criticism and had an extravagant opinion of his own abilities, Sir Philip admits. But what head, he reasonably asks, would not have been turned by so sudden an ascent?

LOUISE MAUNSELL FIELD

A GIRL OF THE EIGHTIES *by Martha Pike Conant and Others.* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.75)

CHARLOTTE HOWARD CONANT grew up in the seventies in the beautiful elm-shaded town of Greenfield, Massachusetts, entered Wellesley College five years after the college opened its doors, went out to become a teacher, and a few years later, with her college room-mate Florence Bigelow, founded the Walnut Hill School for Girls at Natick. Such is the brief outline of her life. These family letters tell much more, for they permit us to peep through the shutters at a real Victorian girlhood. The letters reveal a life at home and at college differing radically from the life of a girl of today. The very strangeness provides a genuine atmosphere of romance. We read with wonder of this girl's earnestness, her fine ideals, her tempered ambitions, her respect for authority, her sense of responsibility for her younger sister, her desire to justify her parents' faith in her. Not even the habiliments of the present appear. Then in that earlier Wellesley College, when higher education for women was still an experiment, how delightful it is to witness the rare rebellions at the excess of missionary meetings, the shy desire for pretty clothes—which are not to cost too much—the occasional fun rippling through the seriousness, and the one real defiance when the girl will not wait for the required permission before rushing in to greet her younger sister, come to Wellesley

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for a visit. This page from the day before yesterday is strangely convincing and strangely moving as well. Do we not find evidences here of the spirit which made New England, which was even then making perhaps the last page of New England which will be history? At least the rare, high seriousness of this girl bids us pause and ponder.

DOROTHEA LAWRANCE MANN

FRENCH NOVELISTS FROM THE REVOLUTION TO PROUST *by Frederick C. Green* (APPLETON. $3.00)

No ONE who read Professor Green's *French Novelists from the Renaissance to the Revolution* need be told that its sequel is an interesting book. With the same eloquence he used for Madame de Lafayette, Prévost, and Marivaux he writes of Chateaubriand, Balzac, and Proust. Although the former volume naturally depended more on scholarship, again the author impresses by the catholicity of his taste—he seems to read Fromentin, M. Bourget, and Pierre Loti and his followers with as much zest as Flaubert and Anatole France, for whom he retains an enthusiastic admiration which many will wish they could still feel. It is all the more surprising that the excellent index contains no reference to *Jean-Christophe* or its author.

This is, however, even less of a history than the former volume; it is really a commentary on the development of the French novel. The emphasis is not on the novelists, as one might think from the title, but, as the author explains in the preface, on the novel as a form. The novelists themselves appear and reappear in various contexts, and there is thus no complete consideration of any author as an individual. The all-important thing, therefore, is the author's "philosophy of literature". Although Professor Green has a definite basis of theory about the development of the modern novel, it tends to be obscured by the fact that his personal prejudices become more pronounced as one gets nearer to the present and sometimes lead him into what is at least the appearance of inconsistency.

Yet he has a certain consistency to which the key seems to be a hearty common sense which, if it has the obvious virtue in a work of this scope of preserving perspective, has the attendant danger of a superficial attitude towards views not the author's own. One does not feel, for example, that one's understanding of George Sand (of whom Professor Green has an opinion otherwise almost as high as that of Sainte-Beuve, who preferred her to Balzac) is in any way furthered by a contemptuous reference to her "Hyde Park period". In a similar vein is the statement that "the Symbolists like nearly all decadents were noisily international". Again Professor Green's disapproval of M. Gide's views as a moralist—or as an immoralist—leads him to be a little unjust to M. Gide as a novelist. It is the fashion just now to have misgivings on the subject of M. Gide—the late Sir Edmund Gosse has been grave and Miss Rebecca West witty; but is it not going too far to call *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* "a string of impressions, *à la* Goncourt, of various forms of juvenile and adult vice"—and to employ in that connection the adjective "feeble"?

We have remarked that Professor Green's opinion of George Sand is almost as high as Sainte-Beuve's. His opinion of Chateaubriand is, if anything, higher; and even Arnold did not admire Sénancour more. He understands French Romanticism as very few foreigners do. He is a devotee of *Adolphe*, "a very great novel"—and something of a touchstone. He has not so much sympathy with Realism, Romanticism's reverse side, but his chapter on

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Balzac is nevertheless one of the best. Balzac, he feels, was something more than a realist; he was a dramatist. "Whilst retaining the minute descriptive method of the novelist . . . he succeeded in imparting to his creations the stature, the universality, and the intensity which one had hitherto associated with a Shakespeare, a Corneille, or a Molière."

Later, in another passage of the brilliant interpretative criticism in which he excels, Professor Green finds something almost Balzacian "in the art with which Anatole France lends the colour of probability to these monsters of equanimity", Coignard and Bergeret. One cannot agree with all he says about Anatole France. No one is better entitled to speak with authority on the eighteenth century than Professor Green, but it is hard to concur without reservation in the statement that "the whole social history of eighteenth-century France is crystallized" in *La Rôtisserie de la reine Pédauque*. Nevertheless one listens with grateful relief to a critic of Professor Green's standing who is bold enough to declare roundly that Anatole France "will face the verdict of posterity with smiling imperturbability", and who reminds us of what we once knew but had allowed ourselves to forget, that in "the perfume of sensibility and of beauty that cling to *Pierre Nozière, Le petit Pierre,* and *La Vie en fleur*", "is to be found the supreme flowering of the Latin genius".

One might expect Professor Green to be a little less in sympathy with Marcel Proust, but the pages on *A la Recherche du temps perdu* with which the book draws to a fine close are among his best. The critic of Gide is able to wish that Proust had confined himself, in describing Charlus, to the Palamède of the *salons*; but on the whole Professor Green sees in Proust the embodiment of the theory of the novel which is implicit throughout his own book. In his last paragraph he sums up the effects of Proust's genius and crystallizes for us his own conception of the solution of the problem of Idealism versus Realism, the search for which is the guiding thread of the whole volume. It is worth quoting in full:

> The world unfolded by Proust staggers us by its complexity as it astounds us by its beauty. Is not that because, half emerged from the age of rationalism, we have grown accustomed to expect simple and material explanations of life's deepest problems and lost to some extent the sense of wonder? As a corrective to this attitude of mind, as a reminder of the profounder and more richly coloured spiritual existence which underlies our rational one, the work of Proust has an enduring value. In *A la Recherche du temps perdu* the great forces of Idealism and Realism meet and coalesce in a blinding flash through which the dazzled eye of the reader seems to behold the image of living reality. One thing, however, is certain. It is that Proust's work signalizes the complete overthrow of an old dogma; for never again, surely, can the novelist return to the nineteenth-century conception of a purely objective art, of a Realism which confines itself solely to the "scientific" notation of unidealised life.

In the history of the novel as a whole it may ultimately appear that the overthrow of the old dogma was signalized by James Joyce. Proust does more; he shows us that it is possible to go beyond Joyce. Nevertheless for this generation he has brought the history of the French novel—which epitomizes as does the history of no other literary form the history of modern European civilization—to a temporary close. We cannot help regretting that one incidental result is that there is now no more history of the French novel for Professor Green to write about.

JAMES ORRICK

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THE NEW NOVELS

Mr. Fothergill, as everyone knows by now, keeps an inn by the side of the Thames near London which is much frequented by writing people. One day Mr. Fothergill had an idea for a plot, and was so taken with it that he set out ardently to find someone to write it for him. It wasn't the brightest and freshest idea in the world, as almost any author could have told him. In fact I suspect that custom fell off sharply at the inn until the day H. R. Barbor had the inspiration of making practically every writer in England see what he could do with Mr. Fothergill's idea ("And may it teach him a lesson," Mr. Barbor undoubtedly said to himself, grimly).

The plot was: "A man gets into correspondence with a woman whom he doesn't know and he finds romance in it. Then he sees a girl, falls in love with her in the ordinary way, marries her and drops the academic correspondence. Happiness, then friction. He writes again to the unknown woman and finds consolation till by an accident it is discovered that the married couple are writing to one another".

So Martin Armstrong, H. R. Barbor, Elizabeth Bowen, Gerald Bullett, Thomas Burke, G. K. Chesterton, A. E. Coppard, E. M. Delafield, H. P. Hartley, Frank Swinnerton, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Margaret Kennedy, Edward Shanks, Helen Simpson, L. A. G. Strong, Storm Jameson, J. C. Squire and Rebecca West all worked over Mr. Fothergill's rather intractable notion and, pooling their efforts in one book, produced *Mr. Fothergill's Plot* (Oxford. $2.50), as amusing a book, to anyone who is at all interested in the craft of writing, as was ever published. With surprising magnanimity, considering that they had been robbed in advance of the story-teller's dear privilege of surprising his reader in his own way, and with no sullen, perfunctory airs at all, this galaxy of talent went at the task, descending genially to the most unscrupulous ingenuity to get the element of surprise back into their versions of the tale.

Mr. Fothergill did not stipulate that distress and disaster should follow on the unmasking of the writers, but one would almost think he had. Quite half the authors could only see, in the revelation of each partner to the other as made up of the same compound of wistfulness, knavery and romanticism, a prelude to black dismay. "Happiness, then friction" was the joker, of course.

Nevertheless, the stories are all good, all readable, and the standard of craftsmanship in them is so high that it caused me to brood for some days in a bitter, transatlantic envy, quite unable to believe that a cross section of our own writers would be capable of producing nearly so good a book. Every reader will have his own choice of favourites, but the women writers seem to me to have come out best in almost every case. Storm Jameson's version is so excellent and seems so spontaneous that it is hard to realize that it was done with Mr. Fothergill's specifications in mind. Margaret Kennedy chose to make a period piece of her contribution, interrupting the correspondence in which her nineteenth-century heroine has been the guiding star of a titled cosmopolitan, sinning By-

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ronically in all the main capitals of Europe, to marry her off to a shy stick of a fellow among her father's parishioners. It was an interesting idea, and the resulting story is a great deal better than a mere triumphant piece of virtuosity.

But Rebecca West obviously looked at Mr. Fothergill's plot, saw the catch in it, threw the nonsensical "happiness, then friction" phrase out the window, and sat down and wrote the best story in the book. Formally it is less perfect than several of its companions; it is top-heavy with atmosphere, which is piled up in the beginning as though this were to be the first chapter of a novel. The story is that of a boy brought up to be a medium, living in a kind of limbo between respectability and the half-world, trained like a prodigy of one of the arts for a profession which would be ruined the moment any training was suspected or discovered; a boy whose mother was one of the notorious and exposed frauds of spiritism, as he discovers later, to his shame. Though the little family of outcasts tricks the gullible at every opportunity, they are redeemed from ignominy by their own belief that they are the uninspired priests of a true mystery. The boy, grown older, orphaned and disillusioned, writes an anonymous article exposing the fraudulence of his own kind, and receives an anonymous letter from a member of the same profession thanking him for telling the truth about seances. Then the boy meets a little girl-medium (and here the rather heavy and atmospheric novel breaks off and is replaced by one of the prettiest and most touching love stories that ever saw print), and they marry. They still observe, even in closest intimacy, the honour among mediums that prohibits showing up their own methods. Deeply in love, each certain that the other could not possibly be less than perfect, each writes one last letter to the anonymous correspondent to atone, in the light of their loving humility, for their hasty, sweeping denunciation of all mediums as frauds.

Perhaps one must read the dozen or so stories in which the husband or wife goes furtively about reviving old romance to feel the shock of delight at the first realization of what Rebecca West is going to do. The best of the other stories falls into place far behind *They That Sit in Darkness*. Not all the ingenuity or craftsmanship that were brought to bear on the other variations of the plot could do for them what Miss West did for her version when she was inspired to bring her characters together on the basis of an admirable impulse.

A Buried Treasure by Elizabeth Madox Roberts (Viking. $2.50) has the clear, idyllic note of a legend. Its story runs on, telling of an old man and woman who find a pot of gold in their field and call the neighbours in to rejoice with them. Then, overtaken by caution, instead of telling their secret, they turn the gathering into an impromptu wedding for a pair of thwarted lovers. Villainy enters in the shape of two itinerant house-painters, but it is ineffectual; the old man's foreboding had led him to rebury the treasure before his guests had come.

A trustfulness comes upon the reader within the first pages of the book, born of Miss Roberts's straightforward handling of her story, and her delicate, unemphatic prose. One knows that she will not betray her old couple to take their promise of comfort and plenty away from them in a falsely sophisticated ending. *A Buried Treasure* is no phantasy, its people are not puppets nor embodied allegorical traits, but living countrymen; so what the magic is by which Miss Roberts turns her old Philly and Andy Blair into an

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American Baucis and Philemon remains her own secret. Certainly no other writer today can get quite this clear, unstrained effect, and no one else could have written the closing chapter, in which all the countryside breaks into revelry in the midsummer moonlight.

Under the bland disguise of a novelist writing a tale about two young members of England's Suburbia, Mr. Francis Brett Young offers us, in *Mr. and Mrs. Pennington* (Harpers. $2.50), an old-fashioned melodrama. There is the heroine, beautiful and young; there is the hero, upright and noble; there is Mr. Bulgin, the middle-aged villain, trying to buy the heroine's love with his gold, and, when repulsed, turning to plot the downfall of her nearest and dearest. The part of loyal old retainer is taken by Captain Small, a war-shocked veteran. There is the lovable and almost witless guardian of the heroine who misuses her fortune and falls into the villain's clutches. There is the baseless charge of murder brought against the hero. And there is even, in the form of a heart specialist to swear that the corpse died of natural causes, the reprieve galloping up at the last minute.

In only two ways does the skeleton of Mr. Brett Young's story depart from its ancient melodramatic prototype: first, the heroine does not rise from rags to riches, and second, she is by no means as virtuous as she is beautiful. In allowing—in fact, forcing—his heroine into adultery, Mr. Brett Young does provide one staggering surprise. Susan Pennington was drawn, for the first half of the book, as rather a good little soul, no more romantic and extravagant than any girl of nineteen has a right to be. She falls in love normally, marries her middle-class paragon, finds herself with more time on her hands than she can fill—and takes to reading meretricious modern fiction. With a suddenness that is inexplicable for all the author's explaining, there she is, before you know it, corrupted by evil communications, turned into a vulgar, tawdry cheat, who hardly waits for her husband's departure on a dull job to fall into the arms of the one flashy man about town of her acquaintance. The uncle of the seducer had a bad heart, which ought to be clue enough to the rest of the book.

The English reviewers seemed to feel, almost as one man, that this was a most auspicious prelude to an enduring marriage; that Susan, warned and sobered thus solemnly by fate, would be forever faithful. But it is hard to see why the insuring of such virtue as this should be worth even a week from a stupid man's life.

On shipboard returning from Europe, the heroine of Mrs. Barnes's *Westward Passage* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.50) comes face to face with her first husband. She falls under his spell again during the voyage, and ashore she elopes with him for the second time, driving away from the daughter of her first marriage, the husband and two sons of her second, and from her old parents, to Nick's home in New England. There, before the first evening has passed, the two fall to quarreling, exactly as they had when they were married to each other, about the scale on which they shall live; and Olivia runs away again, back to conventionality and her prosaic but loyal second husband.

This is an unsympathetic digest of the book, but it is a perfectly fair one. Mrs. Barnes tells the story lightly and gaily, and with a tiresome abundance of adverbs: "mildly", "confidently", "hastily", "penitently", "sharply", "reasonably", "sharply" (again), "hysterically", "tenderly", "falsely", "uncertainly"—all from one passage of dialogue covering less than two pages. The book may widen Mrs.

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Barnes's public to include all those who can see its situation as, first and foremost, irresistably humorous; but the readers who felt indebted to her for the pleasant decorum of *Years of Grace* are likely to resign her to her new admirers without a pang. One need not be utterly sunk in morality to find the tone of *Westward Passage* incongruous to its subject, or to dislike the levity of its solution.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

THE BIG WEDDING *by Olav Duun* (KNOPF. $2.50)

A SAGA in six volumes cannot be finally judged by three of them, and whether Olav Duun should rank with Hamsun and Sigrid Undset cannot yet be decided by English readers. But on the evidence of half the series one may venture an adverse opinion. One objection stands foremost. His treatment is too sketchy to be very powerful.

It would be foolish to advocate mere length, but mere length added to inherent excellence gives emotional force to fiction. The emotional values of any situation need time to sink in upon the reader's consciousness; his imagination cannot be too rapidly hurried from one event to another without generating a protective indifference to them all. Duun's style is objective, colloquial, almost playful, and so seems superficial. He seems afraid to get below the surface and driven by a nervous anxiety to get on with the story. We continually see possibilities for moving situation which the author is content to deal with by flying hints. We can fill in the outlines he sketches with a fuller understanding of his people; but few readers are likely to be willing, if able, to make such an effort, or praise the author for their own creativeness.

Ungrateful as such comparisons are, one is nevertheless continually reminded of Sigrid Undset's ways with like material, and the power of her narratives, enveloped by descriptive poetry, and founded upon a concern for the deepest aspirations of men and women toward the good life. From a purely technical point of view, furthermore, Sigrid Undset *takes time* with her narrative; through introspective analysis she lets the significance of each event grow in the reader; she conveys a profound sense of the inevitable passage of time, in which all struggle and passion and weakness is understood, admired, or pitied, and also seen as ultimately merged in the perpetual recurrence of mortality.

But though Duun does not give us such richness of imagined experience, he gives us much, in his own way. He gives us, incidentally, material of what might be called anthropological interest—local manners and customs, accurately seen and described. He also tells a mildly moving tale. The viking vigour of the patriarch Per Anders has now been long spent, and we view a later generation that has lost the driving impulsion of fixed if material ambitions, and even the bodily vigour to live down the misadventures of youth. The time of this story is the 1880's, and the primitive lives of the isolated dwellers on the fjord are beginning to be altered by the outer world. The alteration is not for the better; and though the author does not clearly indicate it, one may assume that these people are suffering as do all traditional societies when transition begins. They are still superstitious, and cling to ancestral ways such as the three-day wedding feast and the "funeral ale"; their interests are bounded by the mountains and the sea; their business is still primitive farming and fishing. The struggle between the old and the new is partially embodied in the rivalry of the two sisters Aasel and Gjartru, the former moved by motherly

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anxiety to preserve the home she has, the latter foolishly ambitious for easy material success and town ways. Misfortune at last brings them some degree of peace and reconciliation, and ushers in their old age and a dubious future for the next generation.

That future is dubious because of the weakness of the young men. Peder, the most vigorous and wayward of them, marries under ominous circumstances only to succumb to tuberculosis. His is the bitterness of a soul ambitious to lead his clan out of its decline but frustrated by his own weakness. Ola, his flighty bachelor uncle, resembles him, but rises somewhat above his weakness through ability to see his situation objectively. The one strong man of the family, old Anders, the hero of the second volume, is here seen blind and helpless; and his death, symbolically chasing the ghost of old superstition, marks the disintegration of his tribe.

The volume, though complete in itself, looks back, and particularly forward. One may anticipate in later volumes a rounding out of the theme through a working adjustment of the primitive clan to the modern world. Such an adjustment may be in part the task of Mina and Arthur, a newly wedded couple who combine driving purpose in the wife with educated intelligence in the husband. Arthur has been to the agricultural college and aspires to teach the new knowledge to the community. Perhaps he may.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

S.S. SAN PEDRO *by James Gould Cozzens* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $1.50)

THIS short novel, filling so well a need for that *genre* which English writers have failed to meet, is probably one of the finest pieces of graphic writing produced in this country for many years. Inspired no doubt by the facts in the sinking of the *Vestris*, Mr. Cozzens has objectively set down a similar event with a conciseness and a detachment which would do credit to a Stephen Crane or a Joseph Conrad. As told through the eyes of Anthony Bradell, ship's officer, and developed in line with Doctor Percival's cryptic forebodings, there is something demonic in the tale.

Briefly, the facts are these. The *San Pedro* puts to sea with a number of passengers and a cargo of gold, automobiles, cash registers, and other products of American manufacture; develops a dangerous list; runs into a storm; founders and sinks. The handling of ship language, whether or not it is under slight suspicion in the minds of sailors, will give the average reader a fine sense of reality. The discipline of the crew, the illness and consequent incompetence of the captain, the amazement and docility of the passengers—all these are handled with great dexterity and precision. Over all there lies a mystery and a sense of impending disaster as definite as that in *Typhoon*.

It is a book to be read at a sitting, for it is a breathless, climactic tale of action and tenseness stripped of all sentimentalizing and movie heroics.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

THE THREE BROTHERS *by Edwin Muir* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THE three brothers live in sixteenth-century Scotland. The eldest is a Calvinist, predestined to be saved, but forced to wrestle with the Lord in prayer and overburdened with a sense of fate. The others are twins—one idealistic and shrinking, the other selfish and casual, and either doomed to be the other's enemy. The threads of their lives are so woven that all three find themselves living together in a drapery establishment in Edin-

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burgh, where two women—a certain Anabaptist young lady and the eldest brother's wife—supply the interest, aggravate the circumstance, and lead in the catastrophe. But apart from such peculiarities of conflict and behaviour as the religions of that time impose upon them, all five might just as well have been inhabitants of twentieth-century Edinburgh; and I cannot help thinking that they would all have been better off there.

For there is something lifeless about them. Indeed, one might ask oneself, with perhaps too much passion, why on earth this novel was ever written; or whether Mr. Muir could possibly have been troubled by anything more than an academic emotion. Is it an essay on the distinction between Anabaptist and Calvinist? Or are we being read a homily on the sameness of human nature? Mr. Muir should have told us—for there might have been some warmth in the theory where there is only coldness in the novel.

We can have no quarrel with its construction; and the psychological study of a Calvinist in his struggle with a cruel religion and a wicked woman is well enough. But something is lacking, something explosive which might have set the whole story crackling in our minds. I am not sure that sixteenth-century Scotland and Mr. Muir's characters do not cancel each other out—the first making the second remote and the second making the first unnecessary. In any case, as a piece of historical fiction or a piece of psychological fiction, the book lacks colour.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

GUESTS OF THE NATION *by Frank O'Connor* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

"I HAVEN'T discovered any writer so good as O'Connor since I found James Stephens"—this from Æ who has never identified himself with those amiable gentlemen who discover a genius once a week. When we have read the book we may be a little disappointed, perhaps because no young writer can support such a weighty comparison; but we shall still be ready to believe that, one of these days, Æ will be found not to have spoken in vain. There is evidence enough for that.

Guests of the Nation is a collection of short stories about the Irish Rebellion and Civil War. They are realistic stories, but they have none of that Horatian *serpit humi tutus* with which our modern objective realists have begun to weary us. They are told with great restraint and decorated with great economy, but they are not afraid of poetry in the right place and sentiment in the right place. Each one is, of necessity, a little off the beaten track of human experience, for no character can be said to behave in a normal fashion or in normal circumstances. "Normal" of course is an elastic word, and what is normal to the Irishman is sometimes abnormal to us; but even the Irish admit that the Civil War was extraordinary and that nobody's behaviour then could be held against him now. The question we have to ask ourselves is this: how much human experience (universal or general or recognizable or whatever we choose to call it) has O'Connor brought into these very particular circumstances?

The title story is an admirable test. It is about two English soldiers who are held as hostages during the rebellion, and who become very good friends with their guards. They are condemned to death as retaliation for the execution of certain Irish prisoners, and their friends are detailed to kill them. Even up to that moment of horribly tragic irony when the two Britishers are at last persuaded that it is not some kind of practical joke, the story is something we can be almost

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absurdly detached about. It is somebody else's nightmare, and it gives us nothing more than a sense of impersonal horror. But after the death comes Mr. O'Connor's remark: "I was somehow very small and very lonely. And anything that ever happened to me after I never felt the same about again".

You may call that banal without being very far wrong; but the fact remains that, taken in relation to the whole story, it is the story's justification. More than that, it is O'Connor's justification, something which we must take into account when we try to cast up his future. For it makes some terms between a world we don't know and a world we do know; it marks O'Connor as possessing the only kind of sanity we really ask of a writer.

He has two gifts in chief, the gift of irony and the gift of humour—an equipment any writer might envy him; and his poetic imagination is excellently schooled. But the Irish wars are not a severe test. Their variety of incident is itself a variety of disguise in which a writer of moderate talents might pass himself off as an important fellow. This variety, in fact, is a limitation; and we must wait and see what O'Connor can do with a less particular subject before we start throwing roses at him. At present he is in that exciting stage when anything may happen, and the greatest compliment we can pay him is the compliment of anticipation.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MR. LINE *by L. A. Pavey* (APPLETON. $2.00)

MR. PAVEY'S book is not a novel in the conventional sense of the word. There is no plot and there are no characters except those that flit like unsubstantial shadows through the mind of Mr. Line. Instead, we have Mr. Line as he imagines himself to be—not as he would tell his life story to a fellow worker, but his thoughts as he carries on his routine work as an unimportant cog in the wheels of the Civil Service and as he journeys to and from the drab London suburb in which he lives with his unimaginative wife and children.

As Mr. Line lives through his days chained to the unimportant detail of his job and his home, his mind is usually far away—lost to reality in childhood memories, dreams of power and affluence, seeing himself supreme at sports, as the object of all women's admiration, or reliving the fiery days of the war and the mild adventure of his leave in France.

Mr. Pavey has woven these unsubstantial, egoistic vagaries of a man's mind into a delicate, subtle and sure analysis of his character. Mr. Line might be any one of thousands of men who spend their days at routine jobs and go by tube or subway to thousands of small homes in drab suburban areas at night. Through Mr. Line's mental processes while doing this—his flashes of intuition; his awareness to beauty, to creation, to reality; his gradually lessening horror of the feeling of contentment which he realizes is slipping over him; and his curious lack of perception of the meaning of it all—he has shown Mr. Line's salvation, and the salvation of thousands like him, bound to mediocrity by circumstance and escaping it through dreams. It is a fine and sensitive piece of work which impresses one with its reality.

ELIZABETH DOSSER

DOÑA BARBARA *by Rómulo Gallegos* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

THERE have been few books and fewer novels written around the life of the South American plainsman. From Spain, and not our own country, comes this one of a Venezuela ranch

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where cattle are raised in much the same manner as a century ago, where alligators seethe in the tropical rivers, and a ruthless woman, the Doña Barbara of the title, rules all with an iron hand.

Early in her youth, Doña Barbara was disillusioned concerning men. The remainder of that life she devoted to their undoing. Because Altamira, the ranch of the Luzardos, was negelected by the remaining members of the family, Doña Barbara encroached upon the territory little by little, until its best lands were in her possession and its finest cattle marked with her brand.

Dr. Santos Luzardo, the sole survivor of the family, who has been brought up in the city and has almost forgotten his plainsman's existence, returns to Altamira to sell it, but remains to restore it to its one-time grandeur by wresting from Doña Barbara that which is rightfully his. It is his theory that to elevate life, even on the plains, it is necessary to kill the centaur that lives in every plainsman, but instead that centaur becomes stronger and stronger until he is able to drive the terrible Doña out.

As a female tyrant Doña Barbara is a disappointment. Her attraction to Dr. Luzardo weakens her fierceness; so that we do not see the terrible woman we have come to expect, but a woman softened by love, like any other. True, she has a few men shot, or knifes them herself, but these breaches of etiquette are mere whims; at the bottom of her heart the Doña is not so bad as she is painted, and that is a shame, for the minute she softens the suspense of the story is lessened.

The superstitions of the Indians and the plainsmen, the methods of cattle raising, and the lush atmosphere of the tropics serve to mitigate this disappointment and make the novel interesting reading.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

ABOVE THE DARK TUMULT *by Hugh Walpole* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

WHENEVER that versatile conjurer, Mr. Walpole, passes his wand over the magic hat, you are not quite sure whether there will come forth a tender bloom, a rabbit, a nest-egg, or an evil mist that may vanish even while you are rubbing your eyes. Those who prefer the gentle Walpole of the Jeremy books; the natural charm of *Hans Frost*; or the romantic eighteenth-century background of *Rogue Herries*, will probably care not so much for *Above the Dark Tumult*. But those to whom the Dickensian macabre of Walpole and his melodramatic concern with the mystical undercurrents of human destiny especially appeal, will enjoy it.

In some respects, *Above the Dark Tumult* invites comparison with his *Portrait of a Man with Red Hair*. Crespin, the Iago of the latter, is a personification of pure evil; Pengelly, in the present novel, personifies rather the social evil of humanity—a warped, diseased creature from whom none of the other characters—though they hate him and slay him—can ever escape. The story is set in the present, and the action occupies only a few hours of a bleak November day. Mr. Walpole uses the psychographical method of introducing the characters, who, after several years' separation, meet again in a strangely unreal apartment above Piccadilly Circus, their destinies bound by one purpose: vengeance upon the common enemy, Pengelly. There is jobless and starving Dick Gunn, who tells the story; the aristocratic, flaming idealist, Osmund; Helen, his wife; Hench, a flabby, broken-spirited wretch; and Buller, the practical one, who carries with him the last vestige of reality when he escapes the nightmarish network that closes more tightly about the others.

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Any reader with a smattering of modern psychological theory knows the particular psychosis under which each of these characters suffers, and exactly what the reactions of each in this particular situation will be. And, looking at the whole thing objectively, it is ridiculously easy to see through the rest of Mr. Walpole's bag of tricks. But the amazing thing is that it doesn't in the least matter that you can. So completely is he master of the illusion he creates—call it atmosphere if you will—that you are lost in spite of yourself; that, knowing precisely what is going to happen, you cannot break away until the madhouse climax is achieved and the tale concluded. It is of no use to say when the performance is over, "That was simple, after all. I've figured out how he did *that* trick". The next time the magician hangs up the black curtain and produces his magic hat, you will be among the first to buy a ticket.

RUTH LECHLITNER

RAFFERTY *by Willard Wiener* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

"BLIND fists of nothing, humpty-dumpty clods." This description of the hobo by Hart Crane is also a good description of Will Rafferty. He is a born wanderer; he can't attach himself to any place or person; he's irresponsible. In giving him birth his mother dies; the father presents the child to a neighbour family and vanishes in the company of a young lady. The couple to whom Will is given are kind people, but dreary and short-sighted. The child thinks a great deal about God and he likes to imagine himself as a king. At this point in the story one expects that Rafferty will prove to be a misunderstood artist, a Dreiser or Anderson. But as it turns out this expectation is unjustified. Rafferty suddenly gets into a scrape with the girl next door and runs away.

We see him next as a young man in San Francisco. He is still dreamy but he has now a beaten, if not quite desperate, air. His idealistic side is stirred by Clarice, a girl who has given herself to religion and charity; but she ultimately proves too cold for Rafferty. The married Mamie is more to his liking, for she seems to have the instincts of the vagrant. But, with the birth of a child to Mamie (it is Will's child), she begins to take on a more respectable, a more responsible, attitude. The war comes; Will responds half-heartedly; and when he returns finds that Mamie and her family have vanished. Thus Rafferty's one tie is severed, and at the close we see him making love to a pick-up in a dance hall.

For a first novel *Rafferty* is remarkably professional. This self-assurance is perhaps the effect of the author's entire devotion to that system of rhythms and repetitions known as the Hemingway manner. Invented by Hemingway himself, it has, as it were, been handed over to the public. It is, in short, a machine for composing novels, a machine of which anyone who has mastered the controls and levers may avail himself. He merely puts the paper in the proper slit, turns on the power, and stands by while the competent wheels turn out the book.

FREDERICK DUPEE

THE MAGNET *by Maxim Gorki* (CAPE & SMITH. $3.00)

IN an epigram which might serve equally well to characterize this novel, Gorki writes, "The History of Russia in the nineteenth century is a continuous dialogue occasionally interrupted by revolver shots and bomb explosions". *The Magnet,* translated by Alex-

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ander Bakshy, is the second part of Gorki's gigantic trilogy of Russian life during the years from 1880 to 1917, in which he traces the emergence and growth of the spirit of revolt. In *Bystander,* the first part of the trilogy, which carried the story to 1894 and the accession of the Emperor Nicholas II, the germs of revolt were still individual and sporadic. This second part details the growth and testing of revolutionary ideas among the rapidly increasing ranks of the middle-class intelligentsia, a process which culminated in the massacre of "Bloody Sunday", January 1905.

The story of the trilogy is centered in the life of Clim Samghin, a quiet, intelligent, rather selfish young man, who is still, at the beginning of the second volume, a law student at the university. Although he moves in a circle of young radicals and revolutionists, Samghin is himself a bystander, trying patiently to understand the rational basis of the ideas by which his friends have been swept away, but unable to make up his own mind in the matter, or to feel himself intimately concerned in the destiny of the people. When he is arrested by mistake and detained for examination, he is flattered, and pleasantly aware of his increased importance in the eyes of his contemporaries. He indignantly declines an offer to serve as a spy of the secret police. One perceives, but only dimly as yet, the germs of personal ambition which will ultimately draw Samghin into the current of political events.

By far the greater part of the novel is composed of the conversations and philosophical speculations of its characters, who appear and disappear throughout the pattern of the story without particular regard to esthetic necessity, leaving their own particular ideas and theories for Clim Samghin to digest. Even Samghin himself seems little more than a mechanical device for tracing the minute and not always closely related events leading to the first revolution. Only in isolated chapters, which are almost lost in the vast body of the work, does he attain an individual existence. In these chapters—in the descriptions of Samghin's courtship and marriage, and of his tender and sordid liaison with Nikonova—one appreciates something of the power and the minuteness of observation which characterized Gorki's earlier work. For the most part, however, we follow Samghin back and forth on his rather meaningless journeys from Moscow to St. Petersburg, and to the provinces, in his principal mission of observing the progress of revolutionary ideas. Even in the final chapters, which might have achieved a tremendous, sweeping vitality in the description of the horrors of "Bloody Sunday", the effect is largely lost by reason of this same detachment and unreality.

MARGARET WALLACE

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(*Continued from page 556*)

critics that needs qualification: the statement that all great English libraries are sold in London. This is true, of course, of *known* dispersals. But what of the private sales of collections to America during recent years? I believe that when recent history comes to be known the extent of undisclosed acquisitions by American bookmen in Britain will be a revelation. In the meantime I must add that the American Art Association—Anderson Galleries have issued impressive catalogues of the Marquess of Lothian's collections from Blickling Hall, Norfolk, and Newbattle Abbey, Midlothian, which they are selling.

The Demand for First Editions

The following shows the average weekly demand in England (on behalf of both American and British collectors) for modern authors during the last month. The figures are naturally lower than usual. Features are the rise of Trollope, Conrad and Meredith to former standards of popularity as represented by the desiderata from which this table is compiled. While not numerically qualifying for inclusion, the demands for the first editions of Gordon Craig and Frank Harris were notable: both authors have been much in the limelight of late. Of American authors, Mark Twain and Herman Melville were the names most in evidence, as usual:

Anthony Trollope	19
Kate Greenaway	18
John Galsworthy	16
George Meredith	16
Charles Dickens	15
Thomas Hardy	15
John Keats	15
Lord Byron	14
Joseph Conrad	14
Hugh Walpole	14
Lewis Carroll	13
Somerset Maugham	12
P. B. Shelley	10
A. P. Herbert	9
G. B. Shaw	9
R. L. Stevenson	9
Sir Conan Doyle	8
Sir Rider Haggard	8
William Wordsworth	8

X. Y. Z.

Books and MSS in the London Sale-rooms

Does Collecting Pay?—Some Remarkable Cases—Fly-leaf Notes—In Praise of Donkeys—The Mystery of Master Pountney.

"Needs must when the devil drives." That may or may not account for the fact that the owners of various nice collections already sold in London this season did not postpone the dispersals for fear of low prices. For all the depression, some prices are excellent—although there are others not so satisfying to the owners. But figures like $12,000 at Sotheby's for a copy of the first edition of Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590); $11,500 for a large folio MS (early German fifteenth century) of 69 leaves containing the *Apocalypse*, the *Life of St. John*, et cetera; and $7,400 for a *Pickwick Papers* in the original parts (1st issue) tell pretty clearly that the collecting world and future values will not be affected by the present temporary slump. The *Rosalynde*—the second and best romance of Thomas Lodge, who I see comes into Mr. Partington's End-paper this month—was bound to provoke a sale-room dog-fight before America eventually carried it off through Dr. Rosenbach's

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agent Mr. Rham; for this is the only perfect copy known, apart from the fact that the romance gave Shakespeare his line for *As You Like It*. As a sidelight on collecting, it may be noted that in 1901 this copy changed hands at $1,000; and when bought by the collector whose death now brought it forward again it cost him $4,500. The difference between this last sum and the $12,000 now realized is pretty comfortable. The MS turned out to be even slightly better, for it cost in 1903 $4,750, as compared with $11,500. All the same, the *Rosalynde* price is by far the sounder of the two.

There was a very interesting commentary at Hodgson's auction-rooms on a note in this Department last month gently protesting against the fashion of deprecating ownership signatures and other book inscriptions by other than famous writers. A second edition of Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) is not worth more than a few cigars. But a copy at Hodgson's sold for over $30 because an unknown book lover had written a contemporary note on the fly-leaf as to this copy having been read during a coach journey to "the great entertainment" of three lawyers "who afterwards were kind to Mr. Fielding". Another interesting price at Hodgson's was $80 for a set, bound in morocco, of *The British Novelists* (1820, with prefaces by Mrs. Barbauld; 12mo). These little sets seem to be in much demand now. A few lots later William Godwin's *Thoughts on Man* (1831), brought $25 as a first edition in the original boards, partly unopened. At another sale in the same rooms $60 was paid for a first edition (with wrapper and 4 & 32 pp. of adverts) of Katherine Mansfield's *In a German Pension* (1911), the same copy having been bought in a London suburban sale-room for a dollar when bundled with a lot of fifteen volumes described as "relating to Germany". The next lot was of exceptional American

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interest: a not very good copy of Clemens's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, the first English edition (issued six months before the American edition), Chatto and Windus, 1876, selling for $95. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (first, 1915), which appears to be in much demand, realized $45; an inscribed presentation copy by Joaquin Miller of his *Pacific Poems* (1871), $80; and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and *Two Rivulets* (both Author's editions: Camden, New Jersey, 1876), $30.

To return to Sotheby's; it was interesting to see a complete set, 1883 to 1895 and 1897, with five duplicates, showing variety in bindings, of Kate Greenaway *Almanacs* sold in their nice case for the modest price of $120 for the twenty items. Considering that these same *Almanacs* have been so long in such demand, one only surmises that either the figure was freakish (as will sometimes happen) or that the enthusiasts were absent. A curious work *La Nobilita dell' Asino* (Venet, 1599), a *jeu d'esprit* in praise of Donkeys, ascribing every possible virtue to them, reached a bid of $30. Donkeys are worth a good bray; and this work, with its woodcuts in the text and seven folding copper-plates, was worth the money. Another curious book had a long title beginning *Immortality in Mortality* (1647); and the remainder of the title almost told the story of one Master Pountney, a merchant, who was "found whole and sound, without any diminution or corruption of his members or body inward or outward, having lain in his grave 34 years. Published as a wonder of wonders, et cetera". This item was bought for $17. When one remembers the word Arsenic, one thinks how differently would the story of Master Pountney read could the author have told it truly. How the "wonder of wonders" evaporates in the light of scientific explanation.

BURTON, JUN.

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About Europe With Travellers Flippant and Serious

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

IN *The Innocents Abroad* Mark Twain set a fashion for American travel writers that apparently will never die. Of course the model still stands in a class apart, but legion are the echoes and imitations of the description of that famous journey of the good ship *Quaker City* in 1867. Some of them are good and some very bad. Exceptionally good and genuinely entertaining is W. O. McGeehan's *Trouble in the Balkans* (Dial Press. $2.00), the light-hearted narrative of a journey by motor-car through France, Germany, Italy, and the states of Southwestern Europe. More than sixty years separate the Mark Twain trip and the adventures of Mr. McGeehan and "the lady who drives me" yet the Mark Twain influence is obvious, particularly in the little touches of whimsical exaggeration and fanciful prophecy. For example, there is the chapter where Mr. McGeehan describes his search in Verona for the tomb of Romeo and Juliet and is moved to picture travellers of future generations gazing in awed reverence at the tomb of the hero and heroine of *Abie's Irish Rose*. Perhaps there are too many McGeehan *clichés* in the book; too much of the *argot* of the bleachers and the ringside; but for all that, in its field, *Trouble in the Balkans* is "big league stuff".

Another traveller in flippant vein. Rather slight and sketchy is *Conducted Tour* (Rockwood. $2.00), the work of Gil Meynier, a young Frenchman who writes in English, and who, during the war, had the unusual experience of serving in the American army before serving under his own flag. As M. André Noël of Paris—the Noël carries a diagnostic suggestion—he accompanies a party of travellers from the Western hemisphere about London; to Oxford and the Shakespeare country; to Paris; the Château country; the Riviera; and thence to Florence, Rome, Venice, Lucerne, and down the Rhine.

With mockery but without malice Noël sketches Americans who are familiar to all of us, sturdy citizens of Mr. Wilson's Red Gap or Mr. Lewis's Zenith in the State of Winnemac. Noël's philosophy of travel is that a conducted tour should be a matter of the grace of God and a benign calm. A bit that conveys the flavour of the book is the comment about Olio Sasso, the oil that is so widely advertised across the Italian landscape. "Olio Sasso is like Bovril in England and Dubonnet in France. It's so that sleepy couriers can open one eye and say 'Italy', as if they had known it all the time."

About the time that the present century was an infant in arms, or perhaps a little before, Harry A. Franck started the procession of adventurous and impecunious undergraduate globe-girdlers with an itch for writing. The latest recruit to a vast army is John P. Crawford of Indiana University, who has written *Hiking to Hamburg on $25*, a book apparently published by the author. The tone is unpleasantly familiar. It suggests a clever young man who can probably recite Kipling's *If* from beginning to end without any appreciation of its deeper significance. An adept at the ignoble art of "hitch-hiking",

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